

DATA RARE

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JASWANT RAO HOLKAR AND HIS TIMES

By

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THESIS SUBMITTED FOR THE DEGREE
OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
IN THE UNIVERSITY OF LUCKNOW

1964

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(Thesis. 1964)

P R E F A C E

Jaswant Rao Holkar, born with a bar sinister on the shield of Tukoji Holkar, is perhaps the most unforgettable character of Maratha history in the first decade of the nineteenth century. He flashed through the political sky of his time like a lonely meteor. The stirring events of his fascinating, short and active career amidst the picturesque decay of the Maratha power in the autumn of Middle Ages cannot but tempt a historical investigator to bring them into a fresh focus. Extraordinarily courageous, vivacious, an entrepreneur of rapine, fond of war, wine and women - Jaswant Rao Holkar was the typical product of a Krieg-staat and of an unhappy age of degeneration in morals. Impulse and passion gave a strange colour to all his actions. Many of his contemporaries called him a 'monster.' It is true that Jaswant Rao was the author of many misfortunes in Malwa, Khandesh and Desh districts of Maharashtra and many of his actions rightly deserve the strongest condemnations. But it is not to be forgotten that he was the only Maratha chief of his time to understand correctly the gravity of British menace in India, to realise the importance of unity amongst the Marathas and to stand out boldly against the rising fortunes of the British Empire in India. As Sardesai remarks he 'was the last typical Maratha soldier to make a name in history.'

The life of Jaswant Rao Holkar offers a historical framework in which a critical epoch in our history can be seen and studied. Thanks to the Late Sir Jadunath Sarkar and Rao Bahadur G. S. Sardesai, we are now familiar with the deeds and exploits of Jaswant Rao Holkar. My feeling, however, is that a re-examination of the old material may yet yield some facts of importance and throw fresh light on the subject.

So far no biography of Jaswant Rao Holkar has been written on the basis of original sources available on the subject. The present work is a synthesis of original material available in English, Marathi and Persian, supplemented by secondary sources. Space does not permit me a detailed notice of the sources and of their relative value in the preface. I have, therefore, departed from the usual practice of giving a lengthy list of books that looks formidable as Bibliography. There is a mass of original material available on this topic and it is easy to tone up the lights and tone down the shadows from motives of convenience. But my main aim has been to give an accurate sketch of Jaswant Rao Holkar's personality and unfold the stirring events of his stormy career in the proper perspective. The present work is confined only to political history of his times and consequently a detailed account of social and economic life has been left out. The writer is conscious of the defects of the work which are entirely his own. My only justification is the importance of my subject. Besides, I have in my humble way tried to gather all relevant information regarding Jaswant Rao Holkar.

It is my pleasant duty to record my gratitude to the Late Sir Jadunath Sarkar, who was kind enough to suggest the topic, prepared a skeleton synopsis and a short Bibliography and gave me all facilities in his library. It is a matter of great regret to me that I was not able to finish the work during his life time. I am heavily indebted to my supervisor, Dr. Brij Kishore, who, inspite of his indifferent health, went through my pages very carefully and offered valuable suggestions. Without his help, guidance and encouragement the present work would never have been attempted. Any acknowledgment of my debt of gratitude to him may take of the grace with which it

has been offered whenever I needed it. My thanks are also due to Dr. G.S. Misra, the Head of the Department of History, Lucknow University, and Mr. P.C. Mital, the Registrar, for the advice and encouragement I have received from them from time to time.

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CHAPTER XV

Jaswant Rao Holkar's character and place in History.

1. Personality and character

Jaswant Rao Holkar is one of those Golden Rogues in whom History will always be interested. He possessed a heart full of medieval passions; but a study of his character and career in a perspective of dispassionate review and sympathy reveals that he was not without accomplishments. In private and public life, even if his many faults are borne in mind, one cannot but feel that he was particularly unfortunate and that he moved in an atmosphere that was politically and socially vicious.

Contemporary accounts¹ describe Jaswant Rao Holkar as a handsome and dignified person. He was of middling stature,² but of very active and strong make. His complexion was dark and he had lost an eye by the accidental bursting of a matchlock. But the expression of his countenance was nevertheless agreeable³ and 'bespoke something of droll humour as well as of manly boldness.'⁴ Though grave and dignified,⁵ there was a pleasantness in his manners and conversation.⁶ Metcalfe describes Jaswant Rao Holkar as 'Ek-chashm-ud-daula' (His one-eyed Highness) and remarks, "He has not at all the appearance of the savage we know him to be...."⁷ Impulse and whims gave a strange colour to all his actions. He used to have a little lap-dog on his masnad.⁸ Sometimes he 'would assume the most stately deportment and

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1. Waqai-Holkar, f. 92b; Malcolm, Memoirs of Central India, Vol. I, pp.253-254; Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, p.499.
 2. According to Duff, Jaswant Rao's stature was short (Vol.II, p.320).
 3. Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, p.499.
 4. Duff, Vol. II, p.320.
 5. Pearse, Memoir of the Life and Services of Lake, p.407.
 6. Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, p.499.
 7. Pearse, Memoir of the Life and Services of Lake, p.407.
 8. Ibid.

array himself in gorgeous apparel, covered with pearls and diamonds, all which he would suddenly cast aside, and with only a cloth around his middle would gallop on a bare-ridged pony throughout his camp,⁹ From the above descriptions it appears that Jaswant Rao made a good impression on the people he met.

Son of a concubine, Jaswant Rao was unfortunate in his upbringing and early associations. Malhar Rao Holkar II was the hero of Jaswant's juvenile imagination. He was a typical Holkar - vivacious and brave - given in early youth to a life of lawlessness and brigandage.¹⁰ Jaswant in boyhood was quick to learn anything he cared to learn and he learnt better than the average among his countrymen.¹¹ His letters to Bharmal Holkar in Holkarshahichya Itihasanchi Sadhane show that he wrote Marathi 'with great correctness'.¹² He was also a quick and able accountant.¹³ According to Duff, he could read and write Persian.¹⁴ Malcolm testified to his skill in riding, and in all manly exercises, particularly in the use of the spear.¹⁵ Jaswant's tutor was one Chimna Bhau. Malcolm writes that Chimna Bhau was a man of dissipated and cruel character to whose influence some of the worst actions of Jaswant Rao - such as the murder of Khande Rao and Kashi Rao - are attributed.¹⁶ For Chimna Bhau, however, the best authority is Mohan Singh's Waqai-Holkar. In fact, Chimna Bhau was 'an old retainer of the Holkar family',¹⁷ who afterwards took to a life of

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9. Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, p.499.
 10. Waqai-Holkar, f. 25b.
 11. Duff, Vol. II, p.320.
 12. Malcolm, Memoirs of Central India, Vol. I, p.254.
 13. Ibid.
 14. Duff, Vol.II, p.320. Malcolm writes that Jaswant understood Persian though he could neither read nor write it. (Memoirs of Central India, Vol. I, p.254).
 15. Malcolm, Memoirs of Central India, Vol. I, p.254.
 16. Ibid., pp.243-244.
 17. Basawan Lal, Tr., p.93.

seclusion and asceticism and acquired the reputation of being a true spiritual guide and saint.¹⁸ Jaswant Rao and Bhawani Shankar after having lost everything at Nagpur, went to the saint's abode at Jhurka 'to make the sight (darshan) of that holyman the means of attaining to ^{their} his own desires.' Chimna Bhau gave Jaswant three hundred rupees, and sound political advice to go to Jujhar Nayak¹⁹ and presented to him a chesnut-coloured mare named Lanka. Jaswant Rao used to call Lanka as the origin of his fortunes and worshipped her on the occasion of the Daserah festivals.²⁰ Chimna Bhau generally retained the esteem and affection of his unruly pupil except on one occasion when in a state of madness Jaswant gave his Guru a most severe beating.²¹

Though cruel, Jaswant Rao Holkar was respectful to the elderly members of his family and had tears for those whom he loved ardently. He cherished the loving memory of his father²² and his reverence for the memory of Ahalya Bai was deep and genuine.²³ He was passionately attached to his brother Malhar Rao II²⁴ and deeply mourned the death of Vithoji Holkar.²⁵ Though polygamous, he knew what it was to love one's consorts. He loved his children - Bhimbai²⁶ and Malhar Rao III²⁷ - as dearly as any father could ever do. His affection for his nephew, Khande Rao Holkar II, was tender. History clearly indicates

18. Waqai-Holkar, f. 43b.

19. Ibid.

20. Malcolm, Memoirs of Central India, Vol. I, p.198.

21. Ibid., p.252.

22. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p.41.

23. Holkarshahichya Itihasanchi Sadhane, Vol. II, p.19.

24. Waqai-Holkar, f.25b.

25. Khare, XIII, 6858.

26. Holkarshahichya Itihasanchi Sadhane, Vol. II, p.73.

27. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. XIV, p.17.

that Khande Rao's release had consistently been the chief demand of Jaswant Rao as a condition of peace with the Peshwa and Sindhia.²⁸ There was great rejoicing in Jaswant's camp after Khande Rao's release.²⁹ Jaswant's heart was deeply afflicted with grief when Khande Rao died of cholera at Shahpura.³⁰ Little is known about his attitude towards his mother. There is evidence to show that Jaswant Rao did not display much regard for ties of friendship and used to listen to worthless calumniation³¹ against his real well-wishers. It seems that his utilitarian outlook in his dealings with men and affairs stood in the way of his having any special attachment for his friends. We know that Bhawani Shankar followed Jaswant's fortune through thick and thin and acted as his 'guardian, prime-minister, diplomatic agent and lieutenant in campaigns.'³² But with what reward? When Bhawani Shankar was wounded at the battle of Farrukhabad, Jaswant did not care to enquire about the healing of his wounds. After the fall of Bharatpur, Jaswant gave orders for Bhawani Shankar's arrest, against whom his ears had been poisoned by his mean flatterers. However, it was some consolation that Jaswant Rao later on repented for his action.³³ Once Jaswant formed a plot to administer poison to Mir Khan.³⁴

In private life, Jaswant Rao's character was marked by the utter want of morality. As Malcolm remarks, "the licentious passions of Jaswant Row Holkar brooked no control."³⁵ His propensity to intrigue

28. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p.62; Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. IX, p.321.

29. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. IX, p.325.

30. Wagai-Holkar, f. 182a.

31. Ibid., f.178a; Basawan Lal; Tr., p.123.

32. Sarkar, Fall of the Mughal Empire, Vol. IV, p.166.

33. Wagai-Holkar, f.178a.

34. Qanungo, Historical Essays, pp.130-131.

35. Malcolm, Memoirs of Central India, Vol. I, p.289.

with other men's wives and the society of dancing girls was notorious. He had illicit relations with the wife of Ganpat Rao.³⁶ Jaswant forcibly snatched away the beautiful Tulsi Bai from her husband whom at first he threw into prison and then sent him away to the far off south with the gift of a dress of honour, a horse and a small sum of money.³⁷ We find him throwing all discretion to the four winds in the midst of critical situations when wine and dancing girls were near about to lure him. The Nawab of Farrukhabad had prepared such a trap for him to prolong his halt at Farrukhabad till Lord Lake stole a march on him and decisively crushed his army.³⁸ There Jaswant was 'engaged in pleasure and repose and turned the night into day and the day into night without any fear or anxiety.'³⁹ Thorn refers to 'a grand nautch party' of Jaswant Rao at Mathura.⁴⁰ Even during the siege of Bharatpur we find Jaswant Rao 'witnessing the Holi festivity, the dancing of handsome girls and the singing of charming musicians.'⁴¹ Like all Holkars, Jaswant Rao was addicted to drink. His favourite drinks were claret,⁴² chery and raspberry brandy.⁴³ He ordered large supply of cherry-brandy after the battle of Hadapsar.⁴⁴ The shops of Bombay were drained of strong liquors for his supply.⁴⁵ Mackintosh writes, "Holkar has become so besotted a drunkard, as almost to have lost his senses. After an excessive dose of cherry brandy, he plucks the turbans from the heads of his chiefs, and

36. Malcolm, *Memoirs of Central India*, Vol. I, p.289.

37. *Ibid.*, p.261.

38. Bagawan Lal, *Tr.*, p.226.

39. Waqai-Holkar, f.152b.

40. Thorn, *Memoir of the War in India*, p.373.

41. Waqai-Holkar, f. 169a.

42. Fraser, *Military Memoir of Skinner*, Vol. II, p.45.

43. Malcolm, *Memoirs of Central India*, Vol. I, p.246.

44. Malcolm, *Memoirs of Central India*, Vol. I, p.346.

45. *Ibid.*, p.246.

beats them like the lowest slaves."⁴⁶ One is at a loss to decide which was the stronger passion of Jaswant, women or wine? It is unfortunate that Jaswant sought pleasure from the lowest company of unworthy favourites such as Harnath Dada, Ganpat Rao, Jamdev Bhand, Dharma Kuwar and Ram Din. About Ram Din, Malcolm remarks, "His character is a compound of servility, falsehood and baseness, an artful flatterer, and an arrogant boaster, unrestrained by either principles or feeling; abject when in distress and insolent in prosperity." Such company was obviously unsuitable for his young mind, and set a bad standard of public and private morality.

Jaswant Rao's softer vices pale into insignificance when compared with his diabolic cruelty on innocent peasantry and merchants and unfortunate prisoners of war. The Gulgule Daftar gives a vivid picture of horrors perpetrated by Jaswant Rao in the Deccan. The Kota news-writer writes on July 21, 1802 - "Holkar's horsemen are in the Ahmadnagar district. In Desh all the cities have been devastated and the peasants are being subjected to extreme oppression." The same tale is told in two other letters.⁴⁷ "Holkar's fauj are perpetrating a deluge (pralava) by extorting black mail The famine is extreme.... The ryots have none to save them." "The deluge that has overwhelmed the Deccan still continues. God does not let us see how mankind is to survive." When Captains Vickers, Dodd and Ryan, who had served Jaswant faithfully, signified their intention of resigning in response to the 'Proclamation' of Lord Wellesley, he threw them into prison, got up a false case of carrying on secret

46. Mackintosh, Memoirs, p.459.

47. Gulgule Daftar - Letters of 22nd August, 1802 and 20th October, 1802.

correspondence with Lake, had them beheaded and exposed their severed heads on pikes.⁴⁸ On the 15th October, 1804, Jaswant in fiendish outburst of joy, took it in to his head to enjoy a 'nautch' of his dancing girls moving round the head of a white soldier of the 76th Regiment.⁴⁹ He shockingly mutilated noses, ears and right hands of Monson's sepoys on their refusal to enter his service.⁵⁰ In a fit of rage, Jaswant inflicted barbarous punishments.

Jaswant Rao Holkar never had a reputation for orthodoxy. Yet he believed that it was the 'Sudarshan Chakra' of Sri Krishna that saved his life in the thickest of fight.⁵¹ The religion of his ancestors, which he had derided⁵² in moments of sanity, seized him sadly⁵³ when he became insane. He shared the superstition of every Maratha, regarding faith in astrology,⁵⁴ the Pirs and Dargahs. At Delhi he squared his visit to the temple of Kali with his visit to the tomb of Khwaja Qutubuddin Bakhtyar Kaki.⁵⁵ It is on record that he fed the fagirs of Ujjain,⁵⁶ though proved a veritable^{God} of Death to the Brahmanas.⁵⁷ Jaswant's Hindu soldiers were shocked when he plundered Nathdwara and jestingly called the booty he seized as the prasad of God.⁵⁸ He never claimed to be a 'protector of the Brahmana and the cow', who were, on the other hand, allowed to suffer grievously at the hands of his muslim mercenaries.⁵⁹

48. Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, p.326.

49. Ibid., p.374.

50. Fraser, Military Memoir of Skinner, Vol.II, p.43; Owen, Wellesley's Despatches - Letter of Lake to Wellesley, July 21, 1805.

51. Holkarshahichya Itihasanchi Sadhane, Vol. II, No.59.

52. Malcolm, Memoirs of Central India, Vol. I, p.224.

53. Holkaranchi Kaifyat, p.110; Poona Residency Correspondence, XIV, p.51.

54. Holkarshahichya Itihasanchi Sadhane, Vol. III, p.35.

55. Waqai-Holkar, f.149b.

56. Holkarshahichya Itihasanchi Sadhane, Vol. II, p.36.

57. Ibid., p.46.

58. Malcolm, Memoirs of Central India, Vol. I, p.224.

59. Khare, XIV, 6423.

For example, on the 5th September, 1802, Mir Khan came to Toka-tirtha where 'he greatly oppressed Brahmanas and Brahmana women, extorted money and took away hostages for ransom'. On the 2nd October of the same year, the 'Pathan soldiers came to Khed on the Bhima, where they did much destruction and slew one Brahmana and a woman.'⁶⁰ Hindu feeling was outraged by Jaswant's seizure of cows as booty at Pashte in Khandesh⁶¹ and continuous slaughter of cows in public close to the city of Poona by Mir Khan's Pathans.⁶²

It is hardly surprising that Ranjit Singh, the Lion of the Punjab, described Jaswant Rao Holkar as a 'pakka haramzada'.⁶³ But Jaswant, unlike many of his contemporaries, was not a hypocrite. Knowing the commonplace observation that 'one-eyed men are wicked', Jaswant jestingly remarked⁶⁴ when told that the sight was gone for ever from his injured eye, "I was before bad enough, but I shall now be the guru or high-priest of rogues."

2. Jaswant Rao Holkar as a soldier.

From his very boyhood Jaswant Rao Holkar was pre-eminently a soldier. He possessed extraordinary courage, resourcefulness, adventurous spirit and uncommon patience.⁶⁵ Such was his physical prowess that sometimes twenty or thirty men were required to master him and bind him with ropes like a wild beast when he became insane.⁶⁶

60. Khare, XIV, 6440.

61. Selections from Baroda State Records, Vol. IV, p.482.

62. Valentia, Vol. II, p.115; Malcolm, Memoirs of Central India, Vol. I, p.328.

63. Kaye, Selections from papers of Lord Metcalfe, Vol. I, p.267.

64. Malcolm, Memoirs of Central India, Vol. I, p.253.

65. Sarkar, Fall of the Mughal Empire, Vol. IV, p.138.

66. Malcolm, Memoirs of Central India, Vol. I, p.249.

Duff rightly remarks, "the chief feature of Jeswunt Rao Holkar's character was that hardy spirit of energy and enterprize which, though like that of his countrymen, boundless in success, was also not to be discouraged by trying reverses."⁶⁷ We have it on the authority of Bhawani Shankar that during their flight from Nagpur, they once covered 72 miles in one night without any provision except some chura and ghant pivaz.⁶⁸

As a soldier Jaswant Rao Holkar was a genuine Maratha in brains and in desperate courage, and for contempt of death a noble Rajput comparable with Mukund Singh Rathor on the field of Dharmat. He was always at the thickest of the battlefields at Satwas,⁶⁹ Ujjain,⁷⁰ Indore⁷¹ and Hadapsar.⁷² Mere strategy, howsoever brilliant, would not have won the battle of Hadapsar, had not there been a magnetic personality like that of Jaswant to infuse his own spirit among the troops by harangue and personal example. He was the first person who carried his horse to the mouth of guns, and then swept tumultuously through the line of guns of the enemy and fell upon the battalions of Qalb Ali Khan like a hungry tiger upon a herd of deer.⁷³

When Jaswant would come by anything, he was generous and liberal to his followers to compensate for his irregularity in payment of their salaries. For instance, at his coronation ceremony nearly 700 costly robes of honour, shawls, scarfs (shela) and turbans (pagota)

67. Duff, Vol. II, p.320.

68. Waqai-Holkar, f.41a.

69. Ibid., f. 91b.

70. Basawan Lal, Tr., p.138; Waqai-Holkar, f. 92a.

71. Waqai-Holkar, f. 96a.

72. Basawan Lal, Tr., p.169; Waqai-Holkar, f. 110a.

73. Sarkar, Fall of the Mughal Empire, Vol. IV, p.209.

were lavishly distributed among his soldiers according to their rank. His officers were given elephants, horses, jewels and pearl necklaces.⁷⁴ But attempts at intimidation on the part of soldiers and army officers never failed to rouse Jaswant's spirit which made the boldest tremble. "Do not mistake me", once Jaswant said to Jamsher Khan, "for Ameer Khan. I will have you plundered for your insolence of what you have, instead of giving you more."⁷⁵ After the battle of Hadapsar Jaswant proclaimed at Poona that if a soldier robbed even a cowri he would be disembowelled and his body publicly exposed. No soldier had the courage to disobey his order.⁷⁶ Endowed with the habitual aid of command, he could instinctively exact obedience from his commanders who were no gentle spirits. They included Mir Khan, Shahamat Khan, Fateh Singh Mane, Murtaza Khan, Najib Khan, Ashraf Beg, Wahid Ali Khan and Karam Din Khan.

Jaswant's war strategy and tactics had the merit of some originality of their own, though on a superficial view they look an heritage from Malhar Rao Holkar I.⁷⁷ His policy was to make war pay for war and his tactics were to disperse for plunder and combine for battle. For such tactics, the myriads of light forayers and his indigenous cavalry, then known to be the best in India, were well-suited. But the core of his army was a large corps of European-trained infantry which moved rather slowly and was put to use only in pitched battles.⁷⁸ Jaswant Rao, however, had more faith in predatory war against a superior enemy. Extreme mobility was the

74. Waqai-Holkar, ff. 68a-69a.

75. Malcolm, *Memoirs of Central India*, Vol. I, p.256. After the fall of Dig, Jaswant Rao had Harnath Singh beaten with sticks (Waqai-Holkar, f. 157a).

76. Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol. IV, p.212.

77. *Ibid.*, p.200.

78. *Ibid.*, pp.200-201.

life-breath of such tactics. Against Lake, he followed the old Maratha strategy⁷⁹ and had earlier advised Sindhia to do the same against the British.⁸⁰ It must, however, be clearly understood that the retreat of Monson does not establish the superiority of Marathi system of warfare against firearms and discipline under European leadership. Monson had dealt several smashing blows on his pursuer Jaswant Rao.⁸¹ It is also to be noted that Jaswant Rao had no experience of standing siege of a fort.⁸²

Once Lord Wellesley made a hasty guess that a single action was sufficient to annihilate Jaswant Rao Holkar.⁸³ Arthur Wellesley was also of the opinion that war against Jaswant Rao ought not to have been more than a Polygar War⁸⁴ and should not last more than fifteen days.⁸⁵ They were disillusioned when war actually started. Lord Lake, almost in despair, wrote to Lord Wellesley, "I never was so plagued as I am with the devil....."⁸⁶ Jaswant Rao Holkar was no Daulat Rao Sindhia to keep himself six miles in the rear of the point of attack;⁸⁷ nor was he the Peshwa Baji Rao II, whose first concern in a fight was to keep himself ready for a hasty retreat. "....if we cannot reduce him (Jaswant Rao)," wrote Lord Wellesley to Lake, "we have lost our ascendancy in India."⁸⁸

79. Martin, Wellesley's Despatches, Vol. IV, p.46.

80. Malcolm, Memoirs of Central India, Vol. I, p.233.

81. Waqai-Holkar, f.165b.

82. Ibid.

83. Martin, Wellesley's Despatches, Vol. IV, p.190.

84. Owen, Wellesley's Despatches, p.425.

85. Gurwood, Wellington's Despatches, Vol. III, p.171.

86. Martin, Wellesley's Despatches, Vol. IV, p.46.

87. Khare, XIV, 6734, 6479.

88. Martin, Wellesley's Despatches, Vol. IV, pp.207-208.

3. Jaswant Rao Holkar as a ruler.

It is only from scattered references that one gets a rough idea of the main features of the administrative machinery and its working under Jaswant Rao Holkar. He had little time to devote to the internal administration on account of his preoccupations in wars against Sindhia and the British, besides roving campaigns in different places. For most of the time he lived in camp out of the state, and his camp and court showed no difference so far as the paraphernalia was concerned except on ceremonial occasions. 'He had no settled government. His empire indeed was the empire of the saddle.'⁸⁹ When the agents of General Perron visited Jaswant Rao Holkar, the latter pointed to his horse and spear and directed them to tell their master that the former at all times afforded him a shade to sleep in and the latter means of subsistence.⁹⁰ So far as the internal government of the Holkar territories in Malwa was concerned, Jaswant made it clear that 'old usages in Holkar State' should suffer no change under his administration.⁹¹

Though styled as a 'Maharajah'⁹², Jaswant Rao was in theory the Regent of his nephew Khande Rao II during the latter's imprisonment in the camp of Daulat Rao Sindhia and also as long as he lived after his release. Jaswant left the allegiance of the House of Holkar to the Poona Darbar undisturbed. Later on, he assumed the title of

‘औलखौकाभत शाहजाहम बादशाह गजौ का कवजंद अरबुमंद बहादुरमुल्क जुबदुल
उमरा महाराजाधिराज राजराजेश्वर’⁽⁹³⁾

89. Kaye, Life of Malcolm, Vol. I, p.305.

90. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. IX, No.50.

91. Holkarshahichya Itihasanchi Sadhane, Vol. II, p.21.

92. Bagawan Lal and Waqai-Holkar.

93. Phalke, Shindeshahichya Itihasanchi Sadhane, Vol. II, p.117.

The following were the principal dignitaries in the civil administration of Jaswant Rao Holkar.⁹⁴

1. The Diwan or the Prime minister was in charge of revenue.
2. The Bakhshi or the Paymaster-General of the army.
3. The Fadnavis - He received the accounts of the revenue collectors.
4. The Majumdar - His department may be termed as a Register Office in which all sanads and grants were regularly entered.
5. The Chitnavis or the Secretary who conducted all political correspondence.
6. The Sikkanavis - According to Malcolm, he was the keeper of the Royal Seal.
7. The Patanavis or the Treasurer. In his office were kept all accounts of sums received into the state treasury as well as of disbursements.
8. The Daftardar or the Keeper of State Archives.

The above chief civil officers had under them a number of assistants and writers called Karkoons, Mutsaddis etc. Marathi was the official language.⁹⁵ Bhawani Shankar refused to accept the post of Bakhshi as he did not know Marathi well. The administrative units were Pargana,⁹⁶ taluka⁹⁷ and Mauza.⁹⁸ Though a Hindu State, offices were not monopolised by the Brahmanas. Jaswant picked up talent for his service wherever it could be found irrespective of caste, creed or regional prejudice. Bhawani Shankar was a Kayastha, Dharma Kuwar (an Ahir), Balram Agarwal a Vaish. Mir Khan, Shahamat Khan and other

94. Malcolm, Memoirs of Central India, Vol. I, pp.530-580.

95. Waqai-Holkar, f. 68a.

96. Holkarshahichya Itihasanchi Sadhane, Vol. II, p.68.

97. Ibid., p.82.

98. Ibid., p.48.

Pathan free-lancers were among the high grandees of Jaswant's court. For diplomatic service Muslims were preferred on account of their superior knowledge of Persian, polished manners, tact and loyalty. Sultan Baksh and Nauroz Ali were Holkar's envoys sent to Lake in March, 1804.⁹⁹ Officers were generally corrupt. Diwan Ganpat Rao was found guilty of misappropriating the pay of soldiers.¹⁰⁰ Even the Kamavisdars had amassed huge fortunes. The Kamavisdar of Rajgarh Patan possessed 6 horses, 4 camels, Rs.1400 in cash, 60 gold mohars and 200 tolas of gold!¹⁰¹

Jaswant Rao Holkar's constant worry¹⁰² was how to support his big army. Though an able and quick accountant,¹⁰³ he did not have an assured income to support himself. No sentiment, personal or religious, kept back Jaswant when he was in need of money. In 1802, he threatened to sack the 'holy city'¹⁰⁴ of Nasik unless forty lakhs of rupees were paid to him by the people. In the Holkar State there were neither survey or land nor extensive irrigation work for the benefit of the cultivators. The latter were left at the entire mercy of the revenue-collectors called Kamavisdars¹⁰⁵ and Mandlois.¹⁰⁶ The Kamavisdars played the same role as did the Kardars in the administration of Ranjit Singh. The pay of each officer was fixed on the basis of his current and contingent expenses in addition to the pay already fixed in cash for his personal maintenance. The officers were

99. Waqai-Holkar, f.129a.

100. Ibid., f.181a.

101. Ibid., f.59a.

102. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p.35; p.72 (Letter of Close to J.A. Grant, 20th January, 1803).

103. Malcolm, Memoirs of Central India, Vol. I, p.254.

104. Khare, XIV, 6427, 6433.

105. Holkarshahichya Itihasanchi Sadhane, Vol. II, p.68.

106. Ibid.

also granted jagirs¹⁰⁷ Jaswant had introduced coins of his own.¹⁰⁸ Unsettled conditions did not favour trade and commerce. In 1799, Jaswant himself seized merchandise worth nearly Rs.30,000 from the Nagar-seth of Indore.¹⁰⁹

As regards other branches of administration, the judiciary, the police and the Intelligence Department deserve notice. Jaswant Rao had great faith in his spies.¹¹⁰ His spies enabled him to know every movement of Monson during the latter's disastrous retreat.¹¹¹ The Kamavisdar was in charge of the district police. Thanadars were posted by him in different places to apprehend murderers, thieves, and other petty offenders. In big towns the Kotwals had discretionary powers for fine, imprisonment and light punishment.¹¹²

In theory, the ruler was the fountain of justice; but the fountain seems to have dried up in the Holkar State with the death of Ahalya Bai. The Kamavisdars, in addition to their duties as revenue collectors, also decided civil and criminal cases; only criminal cases of a serious nature were referred to them. The Panchayats¹¹³ served as arbitration courts in villages and large towns for settling disputes between two parties. Where the affair was serious, the Patwari used to send a note of particulars to the

107. Holkarshahichya Itihasanchi Sadhane, Vol.II, p.73,p.61,p.82, p.116.

108. Phalke, Shindeshahichya Itihasanchi Sadhane, Vol. II, p.115.

109. Bhagwat, Holkarshahi Itihasanchi Sadhane, Part I, Letter No.86.

109. Waqai-Holkar, f.59a.

110. Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, p.391.

111. Martin, Wellesley's Despatches, Vol. IV, p.189.

112. Malcolm, Memoirs of Central India, Vol. I, pp.553-554.

113. Ibid., p.564.

Kamavisdar, ^{The} Panchayats in towns often conducted their proceedings in the presence of the Kamavisdars.¹¹⁴ Bhils were allowed to have their own crude system of justice.¹¹⁵ Death sentences were rare. Even murders were atoned for by heavy fines.¹¹⁶ Fines and confiscation of property were normal punishments. Opinions of 'Shastries' or learned Brahmanas were obtained before awarding the punishment.¹¹⁷

Jaswant Rao took keen interest in his army. Prinsep rightly remarks that his army 'was the whole machinery of his government' and was at all times kept in motion for the purpose of enforcing contributions from reluctant tributaries.¹¹⁸ Jaswant's army was a heterogenous body consisting of the Pathans of Rohilkhand and Delhi, the muslim soldiers from Khandesh, Hyderabad and Arcot, the Marathas and the Pindaris.¹¹⁹ His commanders used to recruit their own soldiers and were responsible for the maintenance of their discipline.¹²⁰ The usual military grades in the cavalry were Sardar, Tokdar and Risaldar. The corresponding ranks in the infantry were those of Subadar, Jamadar, Havildar ^{and} Nayak. The European officers held ranks as Colonel, Captain and Lieutenant. Distinguished commanders such as Mir Khan and Shahamat Khan enjoyed the title of Nawab. The strength of Jaswant's army varied from time to time. In 1802, it consisted of 30,000 horse, 8000 or 9000 infantry and a large artillery.¹²¹ According to Kaye, Jaswant Rao Holkar's cavalry

114. Malcolm, Memoirs of Central India, Vol. I, p.556.

115. Ibid., p.576.

116. Ibid., p.573.

117. Ibid., p.558.

118. Prinsep, Political and Military Transactions, Vol. I, p.23.

119. Martin, Wellesley's Despatches, Vol. IV, p.189.

120. Waqai-Holkar, ff. 59b-60a.

121. Papers re Mahratta War, 1803, p.344.

consisted of sixty thousand horsemen.¹²² It was superior to that of Sindhia, being better officered and more in conformity with the real Maratha mode of predatory warfare.¹²³ The cavalry was divided into two classes: First, paga, which means horses belonging to the chief, rode by his relations, hereditary servants or hired men called Bargirs. Secondly, Silahdars, who brought their own horses and received fixed pay.¹²⁴ Lord Wellesley was of the opinion that Jaswant's artillery was not equal to that of Sindhia and his infantry 'was not of a superior description.'¹²⁵ The soldiers were not paid regularly and mutiny among them was frequent.¹²⁶ The army depended for its subsistence entirely upon plunder¹²⁷ and Jaswant Rao sometimes failed to protect his subjects from the excess of his own army.¹²⁸ After returning from Punjab he discharged most of his loose bands of irregular cavalry. The rest he formed into regiments and his infantry into battalions. Better discipline was enforced and sham fights were arranged for military training. Jaswant Rao had realised that his defeats were due to his weakness in artillery and firearms. Artillery and fire-arms became a sort of obsession with him and he opened a gun-factory at Bhampura.¹²⁹

Jaswant Rao Holkar was a soldier first and a ruler next by his aptitudes. His administration was no doubt corrupt. But a comparative study of the state of affairs in that age reveals the fact that neither the administration of the Peshwa, nor of Sindhia, nor of

122. Kaye, Life of Malcolm, Vol. I, p.305.

123. Francklin, Military Memoir of George Thomas, p.367.

124. Malcolm, Memoirs of Central India, Vol. I, p.578.

125. Martin, Wellesley's Despatches, Vol. IV, pp.189-190.

126. Forrest, Maratha Series, p.565; Martin, Wellesley's Despatches, Vol. III, p.222; Waqai-Holkar, f. 181a.

127. Malcolm, Memoirs of Central India, Vol. I, p.258.

128. Martin, Wellesley's Despatches, Vol. IV, p.189.

129. Malcolm, Memoirs of Central India, Vol. I, pp.241-248.

Bhosle, nor of any Rajput prince barring that of Zalim Singh of Kota was less corrupt and inefficient. It is not fair to assume, as Malcolm does, that Jaswant Rao 'came like a demon of destruction to undo the fair fabric of the virtuous Ahalya Bai' and also that he 'had no esteem for the principles of good and regular government'.¹³⁰ The regular letters of Jaswant's Kamavisdars¹³¹ such as Vasudeva Raghunath, Balkrishna Rao and Lalaji Ballal point to the fact that he did keep himself informed of administrative affairs. The letters and administrative orders of Jaswant show that he did have some esteem for the principles of good government. Three letters may be mentioned in this connection. In the first letter, Jaswant ordered Sri Kesav Rai, the Kamavisdar of Pargana Patan, to hand over the revenue of Mauza Nimoda to Amar Krishna Joshi as the said village had been given to him in charity.¹³² In the second, Jaswant ordered the Mandloi of Pargana Maheshwar to resettle the villages around and the town of Maheshwar harmed by recent floods of the Narmada.¹³³ In the third letter, Jaswant urged Bharmal Holkar to bring order out of chaos in Taluqa Bagdora of Pargana Maheshwar which had been depopulated owing to the turbulence of the Bhils.¹³⁴ These materials, though fragmentary, point to the fact that the view of Malcolm regarding the administration of Jaswant Rao Holkar admits of considerable modification but not total refutation.

4. Jaswant Rao Holkar and Maratha Politics.

Though pre-eminently a soldier, Jaswant had the instinct of a politician. Once Gangadhar Shastri said about him to Elphinstone

130. Malcolm, *Memoirs of Central India*, Vol. I, p.257.

131. Phaike, *Shindeshahichya Itihasanchi Sadhane*, Vol. II, pp.115-124.

132. Holkarshahichya Itihasanchi Sadhane, Vol.II, p.48.

133. Ibid., p.68.

134. Holkarshahichya Itihasanchi Sadhane, Vol. II, p.82.

"Bahat tricks-wala tha, lekin bada akalmand kukhve tha."¹³⁵ Jaswant Rao Holkar did not seem to have attached any importance to good means for a good cause. He is said to have told Mir Khan that stratagem and treachery were essential to success.¹³⁶ As Malcolm remarks, "But his ruling passion was power on any terms; and to attain and preserve that, all means were welcomed."¹³⁷ Jaswant's dishonourable and mean conduct towards the helpless widows of Mahadji Sindhia provoked disgust even among his unprincipled colleagues like Mir Khan.¹³⁸

Jaswant Rao could never forget that he was a Holkar. He stood out as the champion of the cause of the House of Holkar¹³⁹ and appeared as a saviour of its power and dignity.¹⁴⁰ Provoked by the base surrender made by Kashi Rao Holkar to their hereditary rival, once Jaswant Rao said to his brother, "Had God, in mercy to the House of Holkar, ordained you to be a female, you would have benefitted another by bearing children."¹⁴¹ Jaswant Rao Holkar's demands from Daulat Rao Sindhia on the eve of the second Anglo-Maratha War clearly show how deep-rooted the hereditary antagonism between the ruling houses of Sindhia and Holkar was.¹⁴² It is strange that when the Treaty of Defensive Alliances was concluded between Sindhia and the English on the 27th February, 1804, Jaswant demanded that a similar treaty should be concluded with him!!¹⁴³

As regards Jaswant Rao Holkar's policy, it cannot be said that

135. Colebrooke, Life of Elphinstone, Vol. I, p.276.

136. Basawan Lal, Tr., p.174.

137. Malcolm, Memoirs of Central India, Vol. I, p.256.

138. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. IX, p.26; Khare, XIII, 6862.

139. Sardesai, New History of the Marathas, Vol. III, p.367.

140. Sarkar, Fall of the Mughal Empire, Vol. IV, p.167.

141. Malcolm, Memoirs of Central India, Vol. I, p.221.

142. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. IX, pp.321-324.

143. Pearse, Memoir of the Life and Military Services of Lake, p.263.

at any time he aimed at breaking the framework of Maratha policy. Even after the execution of Vithoji Holkar, Jaswant expressed a strong desire to serve the Peshwa faithfully and to the best of his ability.¹⁴⁴ After the battle of Hadapsar he tried all his persuasions to bring the Peshwa back to Poona.¹⁴⁵ But the Peshwa only thundered that Jaswant Rao Holkar was a monster who must be destroyed.¹⁴⁶ Consequently, Jaswant thought of effecting a 'revolution',¹⁴⁷ by abolishing the office of the Peshwa and by releasing and investing the Raja of Satara with the former authority of his house. But he realised that such an attempt would be looked with disfavour by Panse, Purandare and other chiefs at Poona. Besides, for all practical purposes the power of the Raja of Satara was long dead. Therefore, there was no other alternative for Jaswant but to persuade Amrit Rao to come to Poona and be the head of the State.¹⁴⁸

Jaswant Rao Holkar was a realist in politics. He knew that his ascendancy at Poona would not last long without the co-operation of the British. He made every effort to impress upon Close, the British Resident, the justice of the cause of the party in power at Poona.¹⁴⁹ But he failed. Jaswant also realised the importance of Sindhia's co-operation for the stability of the New Regime. He solicited the mediation of Ambaji Ingle¹⁵⁰ and Raghuji Bhosle¹⁵¹ to bring about a reconciliation with Sindhia. Here too he failed. Therefore, as his difficulties, particularly financial, increased with the course of time, he did not hesitate to leave Poona.

144. S.P.D. XXXI, 30.

145. Bagawan Lal, Tr., p.174.

146. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. VII, p.233.

147. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p.39.

148. Papers re Mahratta War, 1803, p.344.

149. Martin, Wellesley's Despatches, Vol. III, p.10.

150. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p.60; Papers re Mahratta War, 1803, p.75.

151. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. V, p.99.

Jaswant Rao Holkar was the first Maratha chief to suggest the formation of a coalition against the British and he was the first to desert it. For that he is hardly to be blamed. He had no illusions about the Treaty of Bassein ringing the toll of death of Maratha independence. He felt this national humiliation deeply and on January 2, 1803, he told Amrit Rao that he and Daulat Rao Sindhia should compose their differences and jointly oppose the British.¹⁵² On the 19th May, 1803, Jaswant in a letter to Bharmal Holkar, wrote that he would join the Maratha Coalition in case the chiefs showed sincerity for defence and protection of the Swarajya.¹⁵³ Jaswant wrote to Daulat Rao about his intentions; but his letters remained unanswered at Sharza Rao Ghatge's suggestion.¹⁵⁴ After the Treaty of Bassein, Lord Wellesley offered subsidiary alliance or in the alternative war to Sindhia.¹⁵⁵ Naturally, Daulat Rao in his personal interest began to talk of a Maratha coalition. Jaswant tried to make full use of this opportunity by making extravagant demands from Sindhia. But he was not reluctant to fight. He wrote to his commanders, "Maharaja Daulat Rao Sindhia is preparing for a war against the English, and has written to me offering apologies for the past and begging for peace and an alliance. It is, therefore, our most pressing duty to become his partner."¹⁵⁶ The primary responsibility of the break-up of the Maratha coalition rests on Daulat Rao Sindhia. He was insincere and he made a mere show of satisfying Jaswant's

152. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p.XVI.

153. Holkarshahichya Itihasanchi Sadhane, Vol. II, p.46.

154. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p. XVII.

155. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p.121.

156. Waqai-Holkar, f.181a.

demands to wreak full vengeance upon him later on.¹⁵⁷ Sir J.N. Sarkar¹⁵⁸ remarks that Jaswant Rao Holkar's triumph at Hadapsar made the Peshwa an English vassal. But it is significant to note that as early as 1798, Bajji Rao II had expressed his desire to enter into an alliance with the English.¹⁵⁹ His slow resolution ripened to action in the Treaty of Bassein - a political masterpiece of Lord Wellesley.

5. Place in History.

To his English contemporaries, Jaswant Rao Holkar was a 'savage',¹⁶⁰ 'a demon of destruction',¹⁶¹ and a 'devil'.¹⁶² But in morals, public and private, Jaswant was neither better nor much worse than, his Indian contemporaries like Bajji Rao II¹⁶³, Shah Alam II¹⁶⁴, Nawab Asaf-ud-daula¹⁶⁵, and Daulat Rao Sindhia.¹⁶⁶ All of them were the products of an age of 'rottenness at the core of Indian Society'.¹⁶⁷

According to Malcolm, Jaswant Rao Holkar was never more than the leader of an army of plunderers.¹⁶⁸ Kaye remarks that the distraction of the Maratha Empire had been the source of Jaswant's greatness and 'his standard was the common rallying point of all those lawless spirits who desired rather to enrich themselves by

157. Owen, Wellesley's Despatches, p.350.

158. Sarkar, Fall of the Mughal Empire, Vol. IV, p.215.

159. Mornington to Dundas, July 6, 1798 - Martin, Wellesley's Despatches, Vol. I, p.87.

160. Pearse, Memoir of the Life and Services of Lake, p.407.

161. Malcolm, Memoirs of Central India, Vol. I, p.257.

162. Martin, Wellesley's Despatches, Vol. IV, p.46.

163. Khare, XIV, 6710.

164. C.P.C. V, No.1212, p.238.

165. Sir John Shore's letter in Life, I, pp.407-408.

166. S.P.D. XXXI, 31; Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. XIV, p.V.

167. Sarkar, Fall of the Mughal Empire, Vol. IV, pp.343-344.

168. Malcolm, Memoirs of Central India, Vol. I, p.255.

plunder than to rise by honest industry or professional desert.¹⁶⁹ It is true that he thrived on plunder and left behind a long trail of disorder and ruin in Malwa, Khandesh and Dash districts of Maharashtra. Many of his commanders were free-booters. Nadir Singh, the notorious Bhil Chief and the chief plunderer of the Vindhya range, was courted and favoured by Jaswant Rao.¹⁷⁰ But if the Pindaris of Jaswant Rao respected neither the laws of God nor of men,¹⁷¹ Sindhia's licentious horde of followers, vividly described by Broughton,¹⁷² were no better. Besides, we should not forget the fact that unlike Daulat Rao Sindhia or Baji Rao II, Jaswant Rao rose to power from initial nothingness.¹⁷³ One of his favourite plans was the complete extirpation of the Pindaris whom he never allowed to sit down in his presence. Once he reproached Daulat Rao Sindhia for the encouragement the latter had given to the Pindari chiefs.¹⁷⁴

Jaswant Rao Holkar was no doubt a failure in history. He was the victim of many vices of his age. He was 'without a particle of that generosity and wisdom which a ruler of man ought to possess.'¹⁷⁵ Whatever might have been his aim, his means were ignoble. But his difficulties were numerous. Finance was his stumbling block from first to last and his state was a typical krieg-staat. It is a pity that nemesis overtook his destiny at the prime of his youth and he died young. Besides, the times were different - it was the period of 'Sunset over Maharashtra.'¹⁷⁶ It was not that the Indian mind had

169. Kaye, Life of Malcolm, Vol. I, p.305.

170. Malcolm, Memoirs of Central India, Vol. I, p.523.

171. Fitzclarence, Journey of a route across India, p.2.

172. Broughton, Letters from a Maratha camp, pp.21-22.

173. Sardesai, New History of the Marathas, Vol. III, p.436.

174. Malcolm, Memoirs of Central India, Vol. I, p.437.

175. Sarkar, Fall of the Mughal Empire, Vol. IV, p.138.

176. Sardesai, New History of the Marathas, Vol. III, p.522.

become too spiritual in its outlook;¹⁷⁷ but it was because of moral canker was eating into the vitality of Maratha Society and State. It is also to be remembered that Jaswant Rao Holkar had to contend against the rising fortunes of the British Empire in India. His tragedy was also the result of modern age bursting upon a sleepy inert Medieval Society.

According to Malcolm, the lesson of Jaswant Rao Holkar's history is how inadequate courage and talent are when unaccompanied by moderation and virtue, to the successful conduct of public affairs.¹⁷⁸ But there is another lesson besides - that a nation's liberty and independence can be preserved only by a hearty union of its discordant elements,¹⁷⁹ by efficient armies not mere mercenaries,¹⁸⁰ and by plunging into the full rushing stream of modern world progress.¹⁸¹

But what should be the verdict of history on Jaswant Rao Holkar? He was the last typical Maratha soldier to make a name in history¹⁸² and the only Maratha chief of his time to realise the importance of unity¹⁸³ and an army well-trained in discipline and methodical organisation against the British menace¹⁸⁴ in India. In spite of great failings, he was 'the only man among the Marathas then living'¹⁸⁵ - who felt perhaps vaguely a national pride, an impulse to move forward and a yearning towards achievement.

177. Sardesai, New History of the Marathas, Vol. III, p.517.

178. Malcolm, Memoirs of Central India, Vol. I, p.258.

179. Sardesai, New History of the Marathas, Vol. III, p.520.

180. Ibid., p.516.

181. Sarkar, Fall of the Mughal Empire, Vol. IV, p.350.

182. Sardesai, New History of the Marathas, Vol. III, p.436.

183. Holkarshahichya Itihasanchi Sadhane, Vol. II, p.46; Aitihasik Patravayabhar, p.394.

184. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p.XVI.

185. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. XIV, p.V.

CHAPTER I

The House of Holkar

1. Malhar Rao Holkar, the founder of the House of Holkar.

One day, in the first decade of the eighteenth century, a Maratha chieftain named Banda, while passing through an obscure village near Poona on a hunting excursion, saw a strange sight which made him halt along with his retinue. He saw a black snake spreading its hood over the head of a sleeping goatherd boy like an umbrella to protect him from the sun. The snake on hearing the approaching clatter and foot steps slipped away into the jungle. Impressed by this sight, the chieftain asked Malhar - for such was the name of the boy, - whether he had any wish to make a name for himself by joining his service. Deccan in those days was a great theatre of war and provided prospects for soldiers of fortune. The boy nodded assent. This incident, recorded in Waqai-Holkar, was the beginning of the career of the founder of the house of Holkar¹ - with that shepherded boy and with this small beginning the Holkars emerged from obscurity into the arena of Maratha politics and rose into prominence.

The Holkars took their name from their ancestral village of Hol situated under the shadow of the Sahyadri range about 10 miles from Phultin and 40 miles from Poona.² All those who called themselves Holkars did not live at Hol. Malhar Rao Holkar spent his boyhood in the village of Maswali which was situated about "five kos from Chandor."³ Tukoji Holkar belonged to the village of

1. Waqai-Holkar, f. 6b.

2. Malcolm, Memoirs of Central India, Vol. I, p. 143.

3. Waqai-Holkar, f. 5b.

Matgaon and his brethren Santaji Holkar and Rerji Holkar to Boregañ.⁴
By caste they were Dhangars.⁵

The long and eventful career of Malhar Rao Holkar (1690-1766) is a subject too wide to be more than glanced at. It occupies a prominent place in the history of the rise of the Maratha Empire in Northern India in the first half of the eighteenth century. He was not reared at the plough as suggested by Malcolm.⁶ Son of a goatherd of Maswali, Malhar lost his father Kundaji at the age of twelve, spent several years with his maternal uncle Narayanji Bargule⁷ and then joined the service of Banda. By dint of merit, daring courage and intimate knowledge of the Satpura Range Malhar Rao speedily found himself elevated from a genuine soldier of fortune to the rank of a silahdar of 2000.⁸ His triumph over a commander of Nizam-ul-Mulk brought him much fame.⁹ But his entry into the Peshwa's service marked the real beginning of his distinguished career.

Campaigning remained Malhar's master passion till his last days. Against Girdhar Bahadur, the Mughal governor of Malwa, Malhar had a difficult game to play and he played it with consummate skill in the Amjhera campaign in 1729.¹⁰ Though twice outmanoeuvred at Sarangpur and Dhar by the wily Muhammad Khan Bangash, Malhar Rao Holkar gave him no rest by his constant harassment at Mandasor and Sironj.¹¹ The

4. Waqai-Holkar, f. 5b.

5. Ibid.

6. Malcolm, Memoirs of Central India, Vol. I, p. 143.

7. Waqai-Holkar, f. 5b.

8. Ibid., f. 9a.

9. Malcolm, Memoirs of Central India, Vol. I, p. 144.

10. S.P.D. XIII, 33.

11. S.P.D. X, 70 and XVII, 8.

light cavalry of Malhar made havoc with the soldiers of Jai Singh and Khan-i-Dauran in Malwa between 1729 and 1734 and compelled them to sue for peace.¹² Malhar Rao was appointed to the supreme command in Malwa by Peshwa Bajji Rao I,¹³ on the 3rd of October, 1730.

Of all the Maratha chiefs in Malwa, Malhar Rao enjoyed preferential treatment at the hands of Peshwa Bajji Rao I in spite of the fact that Ranoji Sindhia had been associated with Holkar in the management of that province.¹⁴ When Udaji Pawar withdrew from Malwa, Holkar was granted a saranjam of 74 Parganahs.¹⁵ On January 20, 1734, Malhar Rao was honoured by a grant in perpetuity to his family. He was given the district of Maheshwar and nine villages from Indore district (viz. Harsol, Saver, Barloi, Dipalpur, Hatod, Mahidpur, Jagoti, Karanj and Makdom).¹⁶ After the formal cession of Malwa to the Marathas by the Mughal Emperor in 1741, the Holkar state of Indore became crystallized into a political entity¹⁷ and came to possess a unique importance.

After the death of Bajji Rao I, wars fought by Malhar assumed more and more the character of brigandage. It is difficult to accept Sardesai's view that Malhar Rao's undertakings were "particularly intended to get the holy places of Prayag and Kashi back into Hindu possession."¹⁸ Wars had hardly ever been waged with so much perfidy, cruelty and avarice as by Malhar Rao and Jayappa Sindhia in Rajputana.

12. S.P.D. XIV, 24, 26, 27, 57.

13. S.P.D. XXX, p.300.

14. Holkaranchi Kaifyat, pp.8-9.

15. S.P.D. XIII, 54-56; XIV, 58.

16. S.P.D. XXX, p.305; XXII, 82.

17. Singh: Malwa in Transition, p.286.

18. Sardesai: New History of the Marathas, Vol. II, p.363.

Malhar's activities in Rajputana and the Doab diminished his own fame and caused irretrievable loss to the ideal of Hindupad Padshahi and to the State he served.

It is unfortunate that Malhar's talents were not limited to those of a soldier. In his political dealings, he always backed 'wrong horses' for good money such as Madho Singh of Jaipur, Najib Khan and Raghunath Rao. He espoused the cause of Madho Singh, who had no legal right to the throne of Jaipur.¹⁹ Malhar was an avowed partisan of Raghunath Rao, the most infamous character in Maratha history. Malhar Rao and Raghunath Rao had actually paved the way for the diplomatic isolation of Maratha power.²⁰ Raghunath Rao got into trouble with Surajmal of Bharatpur who sent gun powder in reply to the former's demand of an extravagant ransom. Raghunath suffered humiliation and Malhar Rao lost his only son Khande Rao at the siege of Kuhmir (January 1754 - May 1754).²¹ After the death of Surajmal of Bharatpur Malhar espoused the cause of Nahar Singh against his brother Jawahir Singh and had to eat the humble pie at Dholpur.²² Najib Khan, the Dharmaputra of Malhar, had all along been the chief source of mischief for the Marathas. Yielding to Malhar's entreaties, Raghunath Rao allowed Najib to depart unscathed to his home in August 1757. Being in collusion with Najib, Malhar remained inert during the critical stage of the third Battle of Panipat and returned to Poona with a tarnished glory²³ and to carry a tale of woe for

19. Sardesai: New History of the Marathas, Vol. II, p.237.

20. Sarkar: Fall of the Mughal Empire, Vol. II, p.257.

21. Qanungo: History of the Jats, pp. 88-89.

22. Ibid., p.187.

23. S.P.D. II, 21 and 27; Hingne Papers, 202, 205, 207, 210; Khare, I, 26; Rajwade, III, 210.

which he was partly responsible. The deaths of his only son and wife Gautami Bai, a widowed daughter-in-law and an unpromising grandson made the last days of Malhar Rao miserable and gloomy. But he had not lost the martial fire of his youth. As an ally of Shuja-ud-daula, Malhar Rao severely harassed Major Fletcher with his light foray tactics on the plains of Kara in 1766 A.D.²⁴ With his death at Alampur on the 20th May 1766,²⁵ it appeared as if the story of the House of Holkar had come to an end, but in fact a new chapter had begun.

2. The benevolent rule of Ahalya Bai Holkar.

Not much was expected from Malhar Rao's only heir and grandson Malle Rao, who had grown up ill-equipped and who sat uneasily upon his throne, at this time. His temperament, affected by insanity, led him into every extreme of fantastic tomfoolery and sullen gloom. Utterly callous to his duties as a ruler, he found malicious pleasure in placing scorpions in clothes and slippers of Brahmanas and in putting venomous reptiles in pots filled with money meant for the mendicants.²⁶ To the relief of the people, he died nine months after his accession to the throne. Ahalya Bai as occasion demanded took charge of the state of affairs as a sacred trust. After her accession, such powerful men as Raghunath Rao, Nana Fadnavis, Gangadhar Yashwant, the Diwan of the Holkar State, wanted to turn the situation to their advantage and attempted to reduce her to a cipher, by trying to persuade her to adopt a son of their choice. She saw through their scheme and admonished the Diwan; even the threats of Raghunath Rao failed to compel her into compliance.²⁷

24. Khare, III, 573 and 575; Bengal Select Committee Proceedings, 1765(1), pp. 130-131.

25. Holkaranchi Kaifyat, p. 34.

26. Malcolm, Memoirs of Central India, Vol. I, p. 158.

27. Ibid., p. 161.

In her, Ahalya Bai exemplified the type of ruler not frequently found among the Maratha chiefs. The task which she took upon herself was not a light one; it meant transforming a robber chief's sphere of influence into an orderly principality with a regular government. She set about introducing reforms with an earnest goodwill and familiarized herself with the intricacies of administration. Suppressing the turbulent Bhills and Gonds of Vindhya region by building several forts and maintaining a small force independent of the territorial militia, she established peace and order in the Holkar territory. Ahalya Bai had great solicitude for the welfare of the peasantry. 'The peasant near Mhyser used, in hot days, to see his yoke of oxen stopped during their labour to be refreshed with water, brought by a servant of Ahalya Bai.'²⁸ She reorganized the system of revenue collection and gave standing orders to officers to be lenient at the time of assessment. She took care to protect the agriculturists and recognized the rights of Watandars (proprietors of lands). The accounts of receipts and disbursements were kept with scrupulous exactness and the channels of wastage and extravagance were plugged. As a result of this strict supervision the wealth of the House of Holkar was immensely increased.

Though particular about financial affairs, Ahalya Bai had no greed for money. She appropriated the treasures of Holkar, after performing a religious ceremony.²⁹ She was against all unfair means of acquiring wealth and declined to confiscate the heirless property of rich bankers like Devi Chand, Topee Das and Banarsi Das.

28. Malcolm, *Memoirs of Central India*, Vol. I, p.188.

29. *Ibid*, p.186.

Art and literature benefitted from her patronage; trade and industry flourished in her time. The city of Maheshwar was developed enormously, and Indore was raised from a village to a wealthy city. The most important trait in Ahalya Bai's character was her love of justice. She sat for a considerable period in open darbar, referred cases to courts, and invariably administered evenhanded justice. She divided her time between religious observances and public duties. She daily fed the poor, as also the beasts, the birds, and the fishes; and during particular festivals, she arranged entertainments for the lower classes and poorer people of her State.³⁰ Thus Ahalya Bai's indefatigable industry, devotion to duty, and positive contribution for the welfare of the people have secured for her a place of distinction in Indian history.

Hinduism received an added impetus from the patronage of Ahalya Bai. By trying to infuse more of the religious spirit into the Brahmanas of Malwa, she was, in fact carrying on the policy of the Peshwas to completion.³¹ She built numerous temples, ghats, dharamahalas (rest-houses), and wells throughout the Holkar possessions in Malwa and sent support to holy establishments in various parts of India, specially to the holy shrines of Varanasi, Puri, Dwarka, Kedarnath and Rameshwaram. At great cost, she made arrangements for the regular supply of Ganga water to many temples in southern regions, and once, made arrangements for the North Indian tour of ten thousand pilgrims from the Deccan.³² She spent as much as sixteen crores of rupees on all this. The name of Ahalya Bai has a permanent place in the heart of every Hindu.

30. Malcolm, Memoirs of Central India, Vol. I, p.188.

31. Bharat Itihas Samshodhak Mandal Quarterly, Vol. VI, pp.148-151.

32. Selections from Chandrachuda Records, p.49.

According to Sardesai, Ahalya Bai in the midst of her devotional occupations failed to judge correctly the British menace to the Maratha State and did nothing to stop it in co-operation with Mahadji Sindhia.³³ One is, indeed, painfully aware all the time of Ahalya Bai's aspirations and the limitations imposed upon her by her nature and upbringing. It must, however, be stated in all fairness to her that she never under-rated the strength of British power in India, like most of the carpet-knights of the Poona darbar. In a letter dated 28th September 1793, Ahalya Bai correctly describes the uncertain political situation in India, with special reference to Tipu Sultan, the French and the English.³⁴ She had no personal grudge against Mahadji Sindhia. In fact, she was grateful to him for his refusal to unite with Raghunath Rao and Gangadhar Yashwant Chandrachuda to subvert the independence of the Holkar family. She had helped Mahadji Sindhia with a timely loan of thirty lakhs of rupees and wrote congratulatory letters to him at the capture of Gwalior and bringing about the treaty of Salbai.³⁵ But Ahalya Bai could not forget that the rise of Mahadji Sindhia indirectly meant that the House of Holkar would have to play a second fiddle to the House of Sindhia. During the first generation the Holkars stood much higher on the ladder of greatness than the Sindhias. It is unfortunate that, in her last days, Ahalya Bai yielded to the advice of her ever-tipsy and braggart statesmen and dignitaries and constantly egged on Tukoji Holkar, her commander, to assert his individuality on equal terms with Mahadji Sindhia. At last, the grandiose plan for the swift and total destruction of Mahadji Sindhia appeared to the Holkars as chimerical; and, as a result, Ahalya Bai also lost much of her influence as a factor in

33. Sardesai: *New History of the Marathas*, Vol. III, p.211.

34. *Selections from Chandrachuda Records*, p.27.

35. *Ibid.*, p.57.

the politics of time. This increased the bitterness between the two families and caused great harm to the Maratha power as a whole.

However, the personal respect which Ahalya Bai commanded remained unimpaired. Though Ahalya Bai retained the paraphernalia of a wealthy court she lived a modest life and exemplified the noblest type of Indian womanhood in personal life and public conduct. She tried hard to transcend what was accidental or ephemeral in her life. Thus lived and died Ahalya Bai on the 13th August 1795³⁶ mourned by millions throughout India. To call her 'merely the banker of the family', as Sir J.N. Sarkar has described her,³⁷ no doubt, appears to be an underestimation. What she achieved was, doubtless, remarkable. She ruled for twenty-eight years with unique success to the great happiness of her subjects. She accepted obedience to God's Will as a means to human fulfilment. The great value of her work lies in making the State of Indore a model of good government in Malwa in those days and creating a benevolent environment of peace and plenty, of hope and creativity.

3. Tukoji Holkar's contribution to the Holkar State.

As the supreme commander of the Holkar State³⁸ after the death of Malhar Rao Holkar, Tukoji Holkar gained a predominant position and he held that position even in the time of Ahalya Bai. He was ultimately recognised as the Head of the Holkar State after the death of heirless Ahalya Bai.³⁹ The honour came in the sunset of his life when his fighting days were over and when he was almost sinking into senility.

36. Holkaranchi Kaifyat, p.66.

37. Fall of the Mughal Empire, Vol. IV, p.76.

38. Holkarshahichya Itihasachi Sadhne, Vol. II, p.88.

39. Waqai-Holkar, f. 21a.

Tukoji Holkar was a distant cousin of Ahalya Bai⁴⁰ but he was 'in no way related to Mulhar Rao.'⁴¹ He is first heard as a leader of ten horsemen from Watgaon joining the service of Malhar Rao who was in those days a cavalry leader.⁴² This brave and rude soldier commanded the household troops of Malhar Rao⁴³ and accompanied his master in most of the campaigns. Tukoji's first major role was in 1758 when the Marathas made a bold bid to "bathe their horses in the Indus."⁴⁴ Under the leadership of Raghunath Rao, Tukoji Holkar along with Maratha captains such as Sabaji Sindhia, Renko Anaji and Gopalrao Bhawe, planted the Maratha standard on Attock.⁴⁵ A divided authority was established in the Holkar State from the day of Tukoji Holkar's elevation to the position of 'Subedar'.⁴⁶ But he fulfilled all the expectations of Ahalya Bai and was always attentive, faithful and obedient to her.⁴⁷

One is apt to recall the name of Tukoji Holkar in the context of Mahadji Sindhia. Nana Fadnavis and Tukoji Holkar wove around Mahadji successive nets of intrigue for which the latter had to suffer frustration, and avoidable waste of resources. And it was Mahadji Sindhia who had saved Nana Fadnavis from his imprisonment at Purandhar in the hands of Tukoji Holkar and Moroba Phadnis.⁴⁸ In earlier years, the relations between Tukoji and Mahadji were not strained. In the First Anglo-Maratha war, Tukoji helped Mahadji

40. Duff, Vol. I, p.555.

41. Malcolm, Memoirs of Central India, Vol. I, p.163.

42. Wagai-Holkar, f. 9a.

43. Malcolm, Memoirs of Central India, Vol. I, p.163.

44. Selections from Chandrachuda Records, Vol. I, p.49.

45. S.P.D. XXVII, 218.

46. Khare, III, 1229, 1230.

47. Malcolm, Memoirs of Central India, Vol. I, p.161.

48. Sardesai: New History of the Marathas, Vol. III, p.72.

Sindhia in the Gujarat campaign, employed guerilla tactics with effect and fought several successful actions against Goddard.⁴⁹ He devastated the country between Poona and Panvel so that Goddard could get no supplies and advance from Khandala.⁵⁰

After the First Anglo-Maratha War the relations between Tukoji Holkar and Mahadji Sindhia were profoundly altered. As in a letter dated 29th July 1786, James Anderson wrote to John Macpherson - "Tukoji Holkar, who from having been once the most intimate friend is now the most bitter enemy of Sindhia."⁵¹ Both of them had begun to view each other with suspicion even before Sindhia's march to North India.⁵² Differences arose between them as regards the policy adopted towards Ratan Singh of Udaipur, Jawahir Singh of Bharatpur and Najib-ud-daula. After the death of Najib-ud-daula (October 1770), Tukoji Holkar advised Shah Alam, the Mughal Emperor, to confer the office of Mir Bakshi upon Zabita Khan.⁵³ On his refusal, Tukoji and Visaji Krishna attacked Delhi on December 17, 1772 and compelled Shah Alam to submit.⁵⁴

The rise of Mahadji Sindhia rankled in the heart of Nana Fadnavis who wanted to make Tukoji Holkar an instrument of his policy against the former.⁵⁵ Tukoji betrayed utter lack of patriotism, honesty and even a wise perception of self-interest, played into the hands of Nana and freely indulged in anti-Sindhia activities. Mahadji's exasperation knew no bounds because of Tukoji's activities.

49. Duff, Vol. II, pp.407,437, Forrest's Maratha Series, pp.394-398.

50. Khare, III, 2625-2634.

51. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. I, p.73.

52. S.P.D. XX, 271.

53. Bengal Select Committee Proceedings, 1772, pp.286-287.

54. Calendar of Persian Correspondence, IV, 122.

55. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. I, p.388.

When Ali Bahadur had defied Mahadji in July, 1789, Tukoji became the former's close ally.⁵⁶ Tukoji gave support to Gosavi brothers and every Rajput Prince who wanted to evade payment to Sindhia. Daulat Ram, Diwan of Jaipur, formed a plan with Tukoji Holkar at Bhagwantgarh for a combined attack on Sindhia's forces in Rajputana. 'Every anti-Sindhia plot in Rajputana was hatched under Tukoji Holkar's leadership.' The envoys of Ismail Beg were welcomed in Tukoji's camp. These activities bred hatred and suspicion and brought about a clash of arms at Surauli (8th October, 1792)⁵⁷ and Lakheri (1st June, 1793)⁵⁸

Sindhia's generals routed Parashai Dadaji, 'the man of business in charge of Holkar's army,' at Surauli. It deeply mortified Ahalya Bai who wanted to wipe out the family disgrace at any cost. At the battle of Lakheri, the old and ineffective cannon of Tukoji and his rabbles of wild Gossais and Bairagis could not stand before De Boigne's select cavalry and Deccani horse under Jiva Dada and Gopal Bhau. After Lakheri, Tukoji marched to Jaipur, exacted from Pratap Singh a tribute of 70 lakhs and afterwards mercilessly plundered Sindhia's capital. With his 'scattered and brow-beaten followers,' Tukoji Holkar even made preparations for a 'Mulk-giri' in the North west of Gujarat.⁵⁹

In his last days Tukoji Holkar was quiescent in his cups and almost dwindled into senility. He was too fond of drink to stir himself for anything else in the world; 'a flask of wine under a shady bough,' by the side of a cool brook or lake, was 'Paradise anew' to him...." He sent his agents to the Peshwa at Poona

56. Sarkar: Fall of the Mughal Empire, Vol. IV, p.78.

57. Ibid., p.82.

58. Ibid., p.91.

59. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. I, p.391.

justifying his acts and dwelling on his past achievements.⁶⁰

"By our masters order", lamented Tukoji "I had to remain in the Deccan for twelve years which enabled Sindhia to win the heritage of Hindustan and talk big." Tukoji passed away in his camp on August 15, 1797.⁶¹ When he left the stage it was seen that his long career was only a disguised approach to feudal chaos.

4. Holkars in eclipse.

Even during the life time of Tukoji the question of succession had been engaging his own and other people's attention. He despaired of future as his sons broke into violent quarrels among themselves. Sometimes he would say, "If in my very lifetime your brotherly love has turned into hatred and hostility, God knows how it will end after I am gone."⁶²

Tukoji had four sons by three different wives.⁶³ The eldest Kashi Rao Holkar was a weak-minded cripple quite unfit for the active duties.⁶⁴

The second son, Malhar Rao II, was a vivacious youth of undaunted courage but had taken to a life of lawlessness and brigandage. Inordinately proud, he developed positive contempt for Parashar Dada and other advocates of peace in the Holkar's camp.⁶⁵ Tukoji

60. Hingne Daftar, II, 93.

61. Sardesai: New History of the Marathas, Vol. III, p.330.

62. Waqai-Holkar, f. 24b.

63. Waqai-Holkar, f. 26b. Khare, X, 4079, Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. IX, p.40, Bagawan Lal writes, "Tukoji Holkar died leaving four sons Kashi Rao and Mulhar Rao by a woman of the same caste with himself and Jeswunt Rao and Eethul Rao commonly called Eatajee by a Khwas or slave girl" (Tr., p.90).

64. Malcolm; Memoirs of Central India, Vol. I, p.195.

65. Sardesai: New History of the Marathas, Vol. II, p.214.

failed to reform him and even Ahalya Bai could not muster enough courage to restrain this unmitigated ruffian. In her eagerness to uphold the prestige of the House of Holkar sometimes Ahalya Bai had sometimes supported him. Malhar's own mother Rukma Bai warned Ahalya Bai: "You are keeping Malhar with yourself, but you do not know his character." When the matter was reported to Malhar II the worthy son refused to see his mother's face any more.⁶⁶ On the advice of Parashar Dada Malhar was imprisoned for his riotous activities in the fort of Khushalgad, but was released after a short detention as Tukoji threatened to commit suicide.⁶⁷

Jaswant Rao, the third son of Tukoji, was born in 1776.⁶⁸ He was full of adventure, courage and resourcefulness but had a knack for petty brawls. He was passionately attached to Malhar II.⁶⁹ Vitthoji, the youngest son of Tukoji, having received no training for any respectable kind of work naturally took to the predatory way of life. Hingne, who was disgusted with the ways of Tukoji's sons, suggested the confiscation of the entire state on the score of maladministration.⁷⁰

The Peshwa had made his choice during the life time of Tukoji. On the 29th January, 1797, Tukoji Holkar received robes from the Peshwa making Kashi Rao Holkar the Head of the Holkar State. Malhar Rao II's proposal was that Kashi Rao should live at Maheshwar as the

66. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. II, Letter No.257.
Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. VI, No.24-26; Holkarshahichya Itihasanchi Sadhane, Vol. I, 268,273,260,402; Marathi Riyasat, Uttar II, p.25.

67. Sardesai: New History of the Marathas, Vol.III, pp.214-215.

68. Wagai-Holkar, f. 25b.

69. Ibid.

70. Hingne Daftar, II, 73.

nominal head of the state while he himself should actually manage the administrative and military affairs of the state as his brother's regent.⁷¹ Malhar II secretly enjoyed the support of Nana Fadnavis⁷² but failed to gain on his side Bapu Holkar, Paraji Pant Bakshi and Khandoji Pant. Sorely disappointed Malhar II, with his six hundred paga marched away from Maheshwar and encamped at Bhamburda on the junction of the Muta and the Mutha rivers.⁷³ 'His fatuous conduct in the Lakheri campaign was the shame and sorrow of his father's ministers.'

Jaswant Rao Holkar was also not getting on well with Kashi Rao. Once he had to sit in 'dharna' for the payment of 80 'bargirs' under him. Kashi Rao ordered him to be thrown into prison but he was soon released through the intercession of Govind Pant. Immediately after his release, Jaswant Rao joined Malhar with his property. His wife, however, had been left behind. Jija Bai, the astute wife of Malhar II, under the pretence of paying Tukoji Holkar a visit, took her away with herself.⁷⁴

On his side Kashi Rao was not shaping well. Soon after his accession, Kashi Rao committed a great blunder. He purchased the help of Daulat Rao Sindhia for 14 lakhs of rupees against his brother Malhar II. Daulat Rao readily agreed as he was aware that Malhar II's cause was supported by some female members of his own family.⁷⁵ Besides, it provided him with a golden opportunity to render the House of Holkar subservient to him.⁷⁶

71. Waqai-Holkar, f. 24b.

72. Duff, Vol. II, p.148.

73. Waqai-Holkar, f. 24b.

74. Ibid., ff. 25a - 26b.

75. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. VI, p.42.

76. Duff, Vol. II, p.148; Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. VI, p.46.

Daulat Rao planned a night attack on Malhar II's camp at Bhamburda and detached Muzaffar Khan with 500 horse and two battalions⁷⁷ for that purpose. The news of a probable attack by Sindhia had already reached Malhar II's camp. Jaswant Rao admonished his brother saying, "It is not advisable for you to stay in this district. Your first duty is to gather troops, raise the banner of your predominance and conquer territories. Then the expulsion of Kashi Rao would be an easy task."⁷⁸ Malhar II paid no heed to this timely warning and sent away Hari Holkar and Harnath Singh to Khandesh and himself remained encamped at that very place with a small force.⁷⁹ Muzaffar Khan delivered a surprise night attack on the 14th September, 1797.⁸⁰ Malhar Rao fought with desperate courage, overthrew many soldiers including Shamsher Khan and received fourteen wounds. At last he was killed with a spear-thrust.⁸¹ Fifteen of Malhar's followers were killed and twenty were severely wounded. Jija Bai and Anna Bai, wives of Malhar Rao, the latter's infant son Khande Rao, and the wife and daughter of Jaswant Rao were taken ^{into captivity}. On Muzaffar Khan's side, two or three were killed and about forty wounded.⁸² The messengers carrying 'the glad tidings' were rewarded by Daulat Rao Sindhia.

Daulat Rao Sindhia, who believed that the end of the house of Holkar was not far away, allowed his golden moments to slip by. Little did he realise that the death of Malhar Rao Holkar II was to open a new chapter of troubles for him. The time was not far distant when

77. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. VI, p.45.

78. Waqai-Holkar, f. 27a.

79. Ibid., f. 28a.

80. Khare, XIII, 6865, 6866.

81. Waqai-Holkar, f. 28b. According to Malcolm Malhar II was killed by a cannon-ball which pierced his forehead. (Memoirs of Central India, Vol. I, p.195)

82. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. VI, p.46.

appeared on the scene a saviour of the House of Holkar to belie Sindhia's hopes. In the midst of this threatening chaos his bold challenge to Sindhia rang through out the Maratha Empire and gave a new spell of life to the house of Holkar. This was Jaswant Rao Holkar.

CHAPTER II

Jaswant Rao Holkar in exile (September 1797 - June 1798).

1. Jaswant Rao's flight from Poona to Nagpur

In the early morning of the 14th September 1797, a muslim soldier was riding hastily down the road to Poona carrying on his horse a person covered with cloth. The hasty pace of the riders provoked the curiosity of the passersby. When challenged by them, the muslim soldier said that he was a servant of Daulat Rao Sindhia and that he was carrying away with him one of his comrades who had been wounded in the surprise attack on Malhar Rao Holkar II's camp. The soldier had been telling a lie. Actually, the wounded soldier was no other than the younger brother of Malhar Rao II Jaswant Rao Holkar by name.¹

It was the beginning of Jaswant Rao's exile - a period full of romantic adventures, hardships and hair-breadth escapes - so vividly described by Mohan Singh in his Waqai-Holkar. The facts, narrated by Bhawani Shankar, in this work must be regarded as most trustworthy because it is the account of an eye-witness. As a fugitive Jaswant Rao was almost tracked down like a hunted animal; but his indomitable spirit remained undismayed through all the vicissitudes of fortune. The story of the narrow escapes of this twenty-year-old youth² wandering in disguise forms the most exciting chapter of the Waqai-Holkar.

The muslim soldier left Jaswant Rao in the house of a Brahmana at Poona.³ The shelter given by the latter proved very

1. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. VI, p.47.

2. Waqai-Holkar, f. 29b.

3. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. VI, p.47.

timely. He had received two wounds at Bhamburda. He deeply mourned the death of his beloved brother whose glory had been enhanced by the tragic way his life came to an end. Jaswant was worried about his wife and daughter who had been captured by Muzaffar Khan. His younger brother Vithoji took shelter in the house of M. Norronho's son in Poona,⁴ and after some time left for Kolhapur.⁵ Malhar II's other followers had been given temporary refuge at Poona Residency. Jaswant was sure that 'on principles of humanity' they would not certainly be handed over to Daulat Rao Sindhia.⁶

After spending four days at Poona,⁷ Jaswant Rao Holkar left the city on the 19th September, 1797.⁸ He decided to try his luck at Nagpur. Once Tukoji had placed the hand of Jaswant Rao in the hand of Raghuji Bhosle and had persuaded the latter "to be of one heart and endeavour with him."⁹ Jaswant Rao now expected Raghuji to keep his promise and treat him with favour.¹⁰ Before leaving Poona, Jaswant had sent Hari Holkar to Nagpur with some good horses and fine jewellery worth about a krone of rupees.¹¹

Jaswant Rao himself left for Nagpur with Harnath Singh, Bharmal and Achbe Singh.¹² Before leaving they prayed to the family deity of the Holkars at Jejuri. From Jejuri they marched towards Nagpur

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4. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. VI, p.47.
 5. Mill: History of British India, Vol. VI, p.269; Duff; Vol.II,p.148.
 6. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. VI, p.42.
 7. Wagai-Holkar, f. 29b.
 8. Bombay Political Secret Proceedings, 1797, p.1621.
 9. Wagai-Holkar, f. 30a.
 10. Khare, XIII, 6866.
 11. Wagai-Holkar, f. 36b.
 12. Phalke's Kota Papers, Vol. II, 128, 129, 138.

without adequate provisions and clothing.¹³ By swift marches Jaswant Rao reached the village of Kamlapuri and took a loan of Rs. 5000 from the Sannyasi Gosains. With that money Jaswant recruited 200 infantry and the same number of horsemen.¹⁴ On the way to Nagpur, he secured a very intelligent, able and devoted adherent in Bhawani Shankar. The latter was the son of Rai Brij Lal of Delhi who had taken service under the mother of Nawab Faiz Muhammad Khan of Bhopal.¹⁵ Bhawani Shankar thenceforth acted as Jaswant Rao Holkar's guardian, prime minister, diplomatic agent and lieutenant in his campaigns.¹⁶

Jaswant Rao Holkar was well received at Nagpur;¹⁷ but his soldiers were clamorous for the payment of five or six months' arrears of their pay. Fortunately, Hari Holkar joined his master and cleared off the arrears. This was, however, not the end of his troubles. Daulat Rao, having come to know of Jaswant's escape to Nagpur, wrote to Raghuji Bhosle to send him back as a prisoner. "Raghuji Bhosle thought that if the project became known, great trouble would arise and therefore he ought to practice duplicity and thus get Jaswant Rao in his power."¹⁸ Raghuji Bhosle proposed to Jaswant that as the latter's soldiers were turbulent and making frequent disturbances, the two battalions of Bhosle's army should be "placed under his banners."¹⁹ Jaswant agreed, thinking it to be a proof of the unfailing kindness of the Raja of Nagpur.

13. Khare, X, 4079; Sardesai: New History of the Marathas, Vol. III, p. 364. According to Sardesai Jaswant Rao went to Nagpur towards the end of 1799. This date is obviously incorrect.

14. Waqai-Holkar, f. 30a.

15. Ibid., f. 36a.

16. Sarkar: Fall of the Mughal Empire, Vol. IV, p. 166.

17. Ibid., p. 165.

18. Waqai-Holkar, f. 38a.

19. Waqai-Holkar, f. 38a.

Raghuji Bhosle sent off his troops to Jaswant Rao and himself went to the district of Chanda. To the great surprise of Jaswant, the detachment of the Bhosle encircled his tents. With his characteristic boldness, Jaswant broke out of the ring and after traversing nearly 60 miles arrived at Karanja which was situated on the boundary between the Nizam's and Raghuji Bhosle's dominions.²⁰ Meanwhile, Mir Abdul Hasan, the commander of the detachment of the Bhosle, was hard in pursuit of Jaswant and finally overtook him. Jaswant wisely abandoned the idea of fighting against such superior numbers, and returned to Nagpur on the assurance of Mir Abdul Hasan.²¹ We read a different account of this incident in Poona Residency correspondence. In a letter dated the 16th March, 1798, Untoff wrote to Sir John Shore, "Eswant Rao and Hurryba Holkar had taken leave of Raghuji Bhosle on eve of his commencing his journey to Chanda, with an intention of proceeding to join Kashi Rao Holkar who had given them the assurances of protection, and that having advanced a few coss from Nagpur, they fell in with a body of Raghuji Bhosla's troops."²²

On the 20th February, 1798,²³ Raghuji Bhosle confiscated all the property of Jaswant and also put him under surveillance. He produced the letter of Daulat Rao as an excuse for breach of faith.²⁴ Jaswant Rao was not the man to allow himself to be led like a sheep

20. Waqai-Holkar, f. 38a.

21. Ibid., f. 38b.

22. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. VI, p. 140.

23. Sarkar: Fall of the Mughal Empire, Vol. IV, p. 165. According to Sardesai Jaswant was put under arrest on the 30th January, 1800. (New History of the Marathas, Vol. III, p. 364.)

24. Waqai-Holkar, f. 39a.

to the slaughter-house. His faithful follower Bhawani Shankar got into the campoo of Raghuji by disguising himself as a physician and met Jaswant regularly under the plea of the payment of his dues.²⁵ For five months²⁶ Bhawani Shankar made continuous efforts to contrive his master's escape but all in vain. News now became quite widespread in Nagpur that Kashi Rao and Daulat Rao were sending troops to seize Jaswant. At last in the night of the 9th April, 1798, Jaswant Rao came out with Bhawani Shankar from the camp after putting on a servant's dress and taking a pot of water in his hand on the pretext of easing himself. To those who questioned them, Bhawani Shankar replied, "We are the servants of the 'sarkar' (government)." Bhawani Shankar had already kept two horses near the 'dargah' of Raja Beg which was situated about four miles from his residence. He conducted Jaswant to that place and then set spurs to their horses like the 'dark horsemen of the sun',²⁷

2. The fugitive prince

The two fugitives from Nagpur²⁸ covered 72 miles in one night and arrived at the first streak of dawn at the village of Hindola. Thinking that their enemies were hard in pursuit, they rode on for 8 miles more and reached Khaluda. Here they satisfied their hunger with chura (parched rice) and sour onion (ghant piyaz) and took

25. Wagai-Holkar, f. 39a.

26. Holkaranchi Kaifiyat, p. 75; Khare, XIII, 6866; Basawan Lal, Tr., p. 91; Malcolm, Memoirs of Central India, Vol. I, p. 195.

27. Wagai-Holkar, ff. 41a, 41b. Mill writes that Jaswant fled away to Maheshwar; (Vol. VI, p. 269)

28. Ibid., f. 41b. According to Malcolm, Jaswant was accompanied in this flight by a muslim soldier named Shah Muhammad and Bhawani Shankar. (Memoirs of Central India, Vol. I, p. 198)

a short rest before commencing their journey to Jarwar. On the way they represented themselves as the soldiers of Muzaffar Khan or those of Beni Singh according to their convenience.²⁹ On the third day, having arrived at Jarwar, Jaswant purchased a pony and some utensils and also engaged a servant. They spent the night at Barwar which was situated about 8 miles from Jarwar and next morning rode on to the village of Khera. Here they felt the need for rest. As they were about to take their food, the servant brought report that news had spread of Jaswant Rao's escape. Immediately they set spurs to their horses. The people of Khera having become suspicious enquired from them their whereabouts. Bhawani Shankar represented himself and his master as troopers sent to pursue Jaswant Rao Holkar.³⁰

At Elichpur too, their movements provoked suspicion of the villagers. The shrewd Bhawani Shankar in order to dispel suspicion began to act as if Jaswant Rao were his attendant. He used thee and thou as terms of address for Jaswant Rao and with affected censure would call him as a sickly, slow-moving dullard.³¹ At Arjungaon Jaswant went to market to change a gold coin and was caught by a policeman on the suspicion of being a thief. Bhawani Shankar presented himself to the policeman as a follower of Muzaffar Khan and bluffed him by showing amulets and other things. Then like a consummate actor, he cried out in a high tone of censure to Jaswant, "I had sent you to change gold coins and not to enjoy sight-seeing. Get up and come back;" The gravity of his deportment was sufficient to dupe the policeman.³²

29. Waqai-Holkar, f. 41b.

30. Ibid., f. 42a.

31. Ibid., f. 42b.

32. Waqai-Holkar, f. 42b.

From Arjungaon they proceeded to Bhusawar. Jaswant was worried about his future course of action. Bhawani Shankar assured him of every assistance; even offered him his property in Malwa worth about Rs. 10,000. He proposed that they should go to Malwa.³³ The unfailing devotion of Bhawani Shankar touched Jaswant's heart; but he did not want to make any decision without consulting his tutor Chimna Bhau.³⁴ The two fugitives were welcomed by Chimna Bhau at his residence at Jhurka.³⁵ Chimna Bhau gave Jaswant three hundred rupees and presented him a chestnut-coloured mare named Lanka.³⁶ He advised Jaswant to give up the idea of going to Malwa. He should go instead to Junjhar Nayak.³⁷ Chimna Bhau also assured Jaswant that he would meet them again at Kherla.³⁸

3. Jaswant Rao's alliance with Junjhar Nayak.

The pargana of Akrani in the eastern corner of Khandesh was a singularly romantic place with its rolling hills and charming wooded plateau. Its lord was a Rajput chieftain named Raja Bhau Singh. After the death of Tukoji Holkar a contagious disorder of a dangerous nature spread throughout the Holkar's territories in Malwa and Khandesh. Bhau Singh, the chieftain of Maltwar, took advantage of the situation, annexed the district of Akrani and built the fort of Roshmal. Junjhar Nayak of Kherla was a vassal of this chief.³⁹

33. Waqai-Holkar, f. 43a.

34. Malcolm, *Memoirs of Central India*, Vol. I, p. 198.

35. Waqai-Holkar, f. 43b. Bagwan Lal writes that Jaswant met Chimna Bhau at Bhusawar (Tr., p. 93).

36. Malcolm, *Memoirs of Central India*, Vol. I, p. 198.

37. Waqai-Holkar, f. 43b. According to Malcolm Jaswant was advised by Chimna Bhau to proceed to Malwa (*Memoirs of Central India*, Vol. I, p. 198.)

38. Kherla is a village in the Bastar State, Chanda District, Madhya Pradesh. (*The Bombay Gazetteer*, Vol. I, pt. 11, 633.)

39. Sarkar: *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol. IV, p. 166.

Jaswant Rao and Bhawani Shankar after an uneventful journey reached Damarkhera in Khandesh. They put up with Gosain Ramchandra Bharati, a former trooper of the Holkar army. Jaswant sent Dabhaji, Ramchandra's father-in-law, as his envoy to Junjhar Nayak of Kherla,⁴⁰ seeking a friendly alliance with him. Junjhar was reluctant to enter into any such agreement without the permission of his lord. Jaswant Rao personally met Bhau Singh at Akrani and secured this permission.⁴¹

Jaswant now took to a roving and predatory mode of life, justifying his actions on the ground, that Kashi Rao was unwilling to grant him an estate legitimately due to him for his maintenance as a younger son of Tukeji. He recruited 600 Arab and Singhi mercenaries from the parganah of Ali Mohan in Gujarat.⁴² About 200 bargira, 50 Bairagia and 50 Rajput soldiers were taken in employment by him with the help of Bhawani Shankar.⁴³ Jaswant Rao's first action in concert with Junjhar Nayak was the plunder of the parganahs of Sultanpur and Nandubar.⁴⁴ Santaji Holkar and Mahipat Rao, the commanders of Kashi Rao, sent an envoy named Sidhu Bhai to Jaswant Rao, holding out deceptive promises. The attempt failed due to the vigilance of Bhawani Shankar.⁴⁵ Santaji and Mahipat then sent a body of horsemen against Jaswant Rao; but the latter avoiding a brush retreated to Kherla.⁴⁶

Jaswant Rao's raids in the territory of Kashi Rao Holkar became so frequent and destructive that they attracted the notice

40. Waqai-Holkar, f. 43b.

41. Holkaranchi Kaifyat, p. 76.

42. Waqai-Holkar, f. 45a.

43. Ibid., f. 47b.

44. Holkaranchi Kaifyat, p. 76.

45. Waqai-Holkar, ff. 45a - 45b.

46. Ibid., ff. 46a-46b.

of even the British Resident at Fatehgarh.⁴⁷ The Pindaris of Khandwa in the district of Burhanpur were lured to his banners by the prospect of plunder.⁴⁸ Govardhan Nayak of Mekhla with a thousand soldiers entered the service of Jaswant Rao.⁴⁹ He distinguished himself soon by defeating the troops sent by Kashi Rao Holkar from Mandana.⁵⁰ While plundering the village Amla in the parganah of Sondha, Jaswant received a wound on his left shoulder blade. In spite of a bold charge made by him, he was compelled to retreat owing to the incessant firing of muskets. Bhawani Shankar by an excellent contrivance captured nearly 600 buffaloes, 400 cows and 2000 oxen. After selling these animals and paying the soldiers, Jaswant retreated to Mekhla.⁵¹ At Kuradwa he set up an outpost (thana) in charge of Balaji Pandit. Santaji Holkar and Mahipat Rao attacked the thana, but failed to capture it as Bhawani Shankar came to the aid of the thanadar with 100 bargirs and fifty infantry.⁵²

After several months of strenuous activities, Jaswant Rao decided to spend a few days in holidaying. He visited the mala of Gorakhnath and enjoyed sight-seeing on the banks of two picturesque lakes called Nimsarovar and Mansarovar.⁵³ The much needed rest dispelled the ennui which was apt to intrude upon his hazardous career. Meanwhile, the soldiers of Jaswant began to create a row for the arrears of their pay. Jaswant found that the most convenient

47. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. VIII, Letter No. 74.

48. Waqai-Holkar, f. 46a.

49. Holkaranchi Kaifiyat, p. 76.

50. Waqai-Holkar, f. 47a.

51. Ibid., ff. 47b-48a.

52. Ibid., f. 48b. Holkarshahichya Itihasanchi Sadhane, Vol. II, p.10.

53. Waqai-Holkar, f. 49b.

way to pay them was to plunder the villages. Jamshed Nayak, 'the sister's son' of Junjhar Nayak, Balaji Pandit and Bhawani Shankar set out to loot the village of Parkasa. They collected a booty of nearly Rs. 60,000 in cash and a lakh of rupees in articles, 24 horses and 2 pieces of field artillery.⁵⁴ This easy success turned the head of Jamshed Nayak. He decided to spend the night at Parkasa and encamped there against the advice and even the protests of Bhawani Shankar, the latter, thereupon, retreated to Kuradawa with Rs. 12,000 in cash and sent all the articles to his master. Santaji Holkar, as expected by Bhawani Shankar, made a surprise attack, killed Balaji Pandit and took Jamshed Nayak a prisoner. The infantry of Jamshed Nayak took to flight, arrived at Kuradawa and began to clamour for payment.⁵⁵

Santaji Holkar not only recovered the spoils, but won over to his side a considerable number of Jaswant's followers. He declared that if anyone would bring Jaswant as a captive he would be rewarded 'with cash-gifts exceeding his hopes and also with jagirs'.⁵⁶ A tempting offer of one lakh of rupees in cash and the village of Tilhuda was made to Raja Bhau Singh for leaving the side of Jaswant. A similar message reached Junjhar Nayak from Santaji, requesting him to abandon Jaswant for which the former would be granted a jagir worth a lakh of rupees and his nephew would be released. The soldiers of Jaswant now began to make a plan to seize

54. Waghel-Holkar, f. 50a.

55. Ibid., f. 50b.

56. Ibid., f. 51a.

him and put Bhawani Shankar under surveillance. Bhawani Shankar however, managed to send a timely warning to his master. Jaswant left the surplus baggage at Kherla, halted for two days at Mekhla and then marched away to Dharampuri.⁵⁷ Enlisting about 200 infantry, Jaswant wrote to Anand Rao Pawar, the Raja of Dhar, for asylum.⁵⁸ Anand Rao sent a 'dress' and a palanquin to Jaswant and issued directions that all his wants should be liberally supplied.⁵⁹

Bhawani Shankar was less fortunate than his master. His soldiers put him under surveillance; withheld food and drink from him for two days; and set him free only when they had robbed him of all his property. Bhawani Shankar, though shaken by fever, lost no time in marching to Dhar. On the way he met Bhau Singh and Junjhar Nayak. Bhau Singh gave him Rs.25 for travelling expenses. Jamshed Nayak was unhappy about his nephew's imprisonment and complained that Jaswant had marched away in another direction.⁶⁰

4. Jaswant Rao gains adherents

Anand Rao Pawar, the Raja of Dhar, gave Jaswant asylum⁶¹ and employed him for three lakhs of rupees in his war with Ranga Rao, the usurping minister of his deceased father.⁶² Jaswant finished his job in no time.

Meanwhile, tempted by Kashi Rao's offer of money and land, Anand Rao became cold, delayed payment and even thought of seizing

57. Waqai-Holkar, f. 51b.

58. Bagawan Lal, Tr., p.94; Malcolm, Memoirs of Central India, Vol. I, p.199.

59. Malcolm, Memoirs of Central India, Vol. I, p. 199.

60. Waqai-Holkar, ff. 53a-54b.

61. Khare, XIII, 6866; Duff, Vol. II, p.194.

62. Waqai-Holkar, f. 52b.

the person of Jaswant Rao.⁶³ On the advice of Bhawani Shankar, Jaswant left Dhar and marched out to plunder the parganah of Dipalpur.⁶⁴ His soldiers now numbered nearly 1200 infantry, 300 cavalry and 40 or 50 paga horses. Dudrenec, who was in charge of Kashi Rao's regular forces, was encamped near Dipalpur. After ravaging Dipalpur Jaswant, in order to avoid Dudrenec, made a hasty march to Newlai. From there he marched on to the village of Jarwada Barwada. Here he received a letter from Tulsaji Wagh who was the Talugdar of Muhammadpur. Tulsaji wrote, "If you desire to march to this side it would be very expedient and I shall wait on you as your obedient servant."⁶⁵ He also sent to Jaswant Rs. 500, a scarf (shela) and a than of brocade. Jaswant Rao was obviously impressed by the deceptive sincerity of Tulsaji and arrived at Muhammadpur on the bank of the Sipra river. Having noticed that Tulsaji was avoiding a personal meeting and was on the other hand trying to seduce his soldiers, Jaswant immediately left Muhammadpur.⁶⁶ On the way he reduced to ashes some talugas of Tulsaji and dragged away with him many of the peasantry with camels and horses. He released the prisoners after taking a ransom of Rs. 1600. Tulsaji sent 400 horsemen in pursuit; they did nothing and Jaswant Rao reached safely the village of Khata in the subah of Ujjain.⁶⁷

From Khata Jaswant went to Tarana which was in the possession of the Phanse family. He met there Bapuji Sindhia, a former follower

63. Waqai-Holkar, f. 55a; Khare, XIII, 6866. According to Duff, Anand Rao, unwilling to provoke Sindhia, dismissed Jaswant Rao after giving him some money and a few horses. (Vol. II, p. 194).

64. Waqai-Holkar, f. 55a.

65. Ibid., f. 55b.

66. Ibid., ff. 56a-56b.

67. Waqai-Holkar, ff. 57b-58b.

of Malhar II, and received Rs.500 and a canopy from him. Having engaged nearly 200 infantry and 12 horsemen, Jaswant advanced to Kaitha. Rurji Holkar, the revenue collector of the place, welcomed him, presented Rs.1000 and 'posted forty horsemen to attend on him'.⁶⁸ Next, Jaswant seized merchandise worth nearly Rs.30,000 from the Nagar-seth of Indore and also robbed the collector of Rajgad Patan of his property consisting of 6 horses, 4 camels, Rs.400 in cash, 60 gold mohars and 200 tolas of gold.⁶⁹ He took to a predatory way of life and roamed about as a free-lance far and wide, being reported at Jhunkra, Shahjahanpur, Sonera and Sarangpur.⁷⁰

Jaswant Rao Holkar's success as a leader of brigands drew to his side roving bands of armed robbers, mercenary soldiers, ambitious adventurers and some servants of his father's kingdom.⁷¹ In Jaswant many saw a new hope for the revival of the House of Holkar. Notable amongst the new adherents of Jaswant were Mir Wazir Hasan, Mihrban Singh, Zaman Khan and Somaji Darpiya.⁷² Most valuable was, however, Mir Khan, a rising leader of Pathan condottieri in the eighteenth century. The alliance between Jaswant Rao and Mir Khan was indeed portentous and promised greater success for the Holkar. The days of exile were over and this was due to the loyal and devoted services of Bhawani Shankar. Jaswant Rao opened a new chapter in his life as the entrepreneur of rapine. This was done because the

68. Waqai-Holkar., ff. 58a-59a.

69. Ibid., f. 59a.

70. Malcolm, Memoirs of Central India, Vol. I, pp. 202-203.

71. Sarkar, Fall of the Mughal Empire, Vol. IV, p. 166.

72. Waqai-Holkar, ff. 59b-60a.

necessary expenses of his newly recruited army could be met only by a regular succession of predatory raids. Though hazardous and indefensible from the moral point of view this way of life was full of promise for Jaswant Rao Holkar who rose in importance from initial nothingness. He set his followers aglow with the ardour of his dreams and obstinate ambition.

CHAPTER III

The Rise of Jaswant Rao Holkar (1798 - 1799 A.D.)

1. Mir Khan, the new friend of Jaswant Rao Holkar.

The life of the Pathan freebooters in India in the eighteenth century and the early nineteenth century was nowhere more fully expressed than in the life of Mir Khan. Prolific in crime, this accursed leader of Pindari hordes turned Rajputana and Central India into a howling wilderness. Born on the 6th May, 1769,¹ Mir Khan was the son of Muhammad Hyat Khan who was a Pathan of the Salar Zai tribe.² He spent his boyhood at 'Surace Tareena' near Sambhal in Katehar (Rohilkhand).³ When about twenty years of age, he left home in search of an independent career as a soldier and took service under Bijay Singh of Jodhpur and afterwards under Gaskwad of Baroda.⁴ The civil war in Bhopal (1794-1796 A.D.) gave a dramatic turn to his career. "During these fights, heroic deeds were done by Amir Khan, which enhanced his fame and rank."⁵ After his departure from Poona in 1796, Mir Khan came into contact with the predatory hordes of the Girasia chiefs and the Marathas. From them he learnt the art of thriving on plunder. Mir Khan had inherited the fierce wrath as well as the tenderness of his race. Often pitiless and brutal, he was at other times frank, affable and even good-humoured.⁶ Adventure was the very breath of his

1. Bagawan Lal, Tr., p.9.

2. Ibid., p.7. According to Fraser, Mir Khan's father was Illyat Khan who belonged to the Tereen tribe. (Military Memoir of Skinner, Vol. II, p.70.)

3. Bagawan Lal, Tr., p. 7.

4. Ibid., p. 15.

5. Waqai-Holkar, f. 60b.

6. Bagawan Lal, Tr., p. IV.

life. He was a perfect rider, a skilled swordsman and a fine shot. Mir Khan was possessed of great physical prowess, (contempt of death,) uncommon patience and a strong turn for intrigue. In Fraser's words, "he had more of the tiger than the lion - perhaps more of the serpent than of either."⁷ But Fraser has not done justice to Mir Khan by painting him as clownish, rude, dirtily dressed, coarse in conversation and deficient in personal courage.⁸ It is hardly surprising that Jaswant Rao Holkar would make Mir Khan his sworn brother and the closest instrument,⁹ as the latter's ability, audacity and fame in predatory warfare marked him out as a fit auxiliary for Jaswant.¹⁰

Mir Khan was no stranger to Bhawani Shankar.¹¹ The attention of Jaswant Rao Holkar turned to Mir Khan in 1798¹² when Bhawani Shankar told him all about the merits of the Pathan chief. According to Basawan Lal, there was one Khundoo who told Jaswant of the past history of Mir Khan with which he was well-acquainted.¹³ In July, 1798, Mir Khan wrote to Bhawani Shankar from Bhopal, expressing a desire to enter Jaswant's service.¹⁴ Bhawani Shankar and Mir Wazir Hasan¹⁵ borrowed five thousand rupees from Ratanchand Seth and sent two thousand out of it to Mir Khan to equip his force and join Jaswant Rao Holkar's camp at Shujawalpur.¹⁶

7. Fraser, Military Memoir of Skinner, Vol. II, p.70.

8. Ibid.

9. Sarkar, Fall of the Mughal Empire, Vol. IV, p. 168.

10. Compton, European Military Adventurers of Hindustan, p. 253.

11. Waqai-Holkar, f. 62a.

12. Khare, XIII, 6867.

13. Basawan Lal, Tr., p. 94.

14. Waqai-Holkar, f. 60a.

15. Malcolm, Memoirs of Central India, Vol. I, p. 203.

16. Waqai-Holkar, f. 62a; Basawan Lal, Tr., p. 96. Sir J.N. Sarkar writes that Rs.5000 was sent to Mir Khan. (Fall of Mughal Empire, Vol. IV, p. 169.)

According to Malcolm the meeting of Jaswant Rao Holkar and Mir Khan took place at Ranagunj.¹⁷ An agreement was made to this effect that Mir Khan would never forsake the cause of Jaswant Rao and Jaswant Rao on his part gave a written promise that he would allow Mir Khan an equal share in all future plunder and conquests.¹⁸ Jaswant gave Mir Khan a splendid robe of honour and Rs.1000 for feasting.¹⁹ Mir Khan was not blind to the advantages of allying himself with Jaswant Rao through whom a 'road might be opened to the management of great affairs even to the very highest form behind the curtain.'²⁰ The report of this alliance drew to Jaswant's side all the mercenary soldiers of the country and ambitious adventurers. Notable amongst them were Ram Singh, the sardar in the pagah of Kashi Rao Holkar, Najib Khan of Rampur with 100 infantry and 11 horsemen, Kale Khan with 40 troopers, Sadr-ud-din Khan with 100 troopers, Mir Najaf Ali with 100 horsemen, Jafar Ali Khan of Mewar with 50 horsemen and 200 infantry, Hakim Khan with 60 horsemen and Ramji Golia Harpha.²¹ In this way the army of Jaswant Rao swelled to 5000 infantry and 2000 cavalry. As a large amount was required for its support, Jaswant Rao Holkar and Mir Khan looted Pankajpur, exacted Rs.10,000 as tribute from Shujawalpur and took another Rs.12,000 in cash and clothing from the chief of Narsingharh. Next they marched back to the Narmada looting the places on the way. They exacted Rs.15000 from Ashta and Rs.27000 from Mimawar.²²

17. Malcolm, *Memoirs of Central India*, Vol. I, p. 203.

18. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p.61.

19. Waghai-Holkar, f. 63a.

20. Bagawan Lal, Tr., p.95.

21. Waghai-Holkar, ff. 63a-64a.

22. Ibid., ff. 63a-63b.

In the autumn of 1798, Jaswant Rao Holkar and Mir Khan had to make a rapid detour far to the east to avoid the regular forces of Kashi Rao Holkar under Chevalier Dudrence lying to the immediate south of Indore.²³ They encamped at Bhadoor which was situated on the north bank of the Narmada. On the opposite side of the Narmada at Handia stood a detachment of Sindhia.²⁴ On the suggestion of Mir Khan, Karam Din Khan, with three hundred horsemen, crossed the river by boats and delivered an assault on this force. The party of Sindhia on the ford fled away to the town of Handia. Jaswant Rao and Mir Khan easily crossed the river, plundered Handia and got rich booty.²⁵ They did not besiege the fort of Handia knowing that Raghuji Bhosle was planning to send aid to Sindhia's men. After halting at Handia for four days, Jaswant and Mir Khan marched away towards Khargaon Batisi making money on the way - Rs. 2,000 at Mundi; Rs. 26,000 at Satwad, a dependency of Khargaon Batisi; and Rs. 20,000 at Bhikangaon.²⁶

At Bhikangaon news arrived in December, 1798, that two battalions of Dudrence's corps were advancing to the south of the Narmada. Jaswant shifted from Bhikangaon to Kasraod and sent his camp for safety to the difficult hilly country which lay behind the village.²⁷ He then divided his army into two bodies to meet the two battalions of Dudrence, one Telinga and one Najib. Basawan Lal gives the credit of this plan to Mir Khan.²⁸ Mihrban Singh with 600 infantry and Mir Khan with his followers dispersed the Najib Paltan. The Telinga Paltan of Dudrence was defeated by

23. Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol. IV, p. 169.

24. Basawan Lal, Tr., p. 98.

25. Ibid.

26. *Waqai-Holkar*, ff. 63a-64b.

27. Ibid., f. 65a.; Basawan Lal, Tr., p. 99.

28. Basawan Lal, Tr., p. 100.

Jaswant Rao with the help of Bhawani Shankar and Jafar Ali Khan. Bhawani Shankar received a bayonet thrust under his finger-tips and the brave Jafar Ali Khan died having received 16 severe wounds. Four guns, two elephants and a large supply of stores and equipment fell into the hands of Jaswant Rao Holkar.²⁹ Alliance with Mir Khan so strengthened Holkar that to whichever side his (Jaswant's) army turned its face, victory advanced to welcome it.³⁰

2. Jaswant Rao Holkar captures Maheshwar, January, 1799 A.D.

Kashi Rao Holkar was an unworthy ruler. Instead of consolidating his position at Maheshwar, he waited upon the Peshwa and joined him in deciding important matters of state.³¹ His empty threats from a distance and ragtag rabbles did not make any impression on Jaswant Rao. Peshwa Baji Rao II on his part had been taking a malicious pleasure in the activities of Jaswant Rao. Daulat Rao, who regarded Kashi Rao as his trump-card did not take any effective steps to put down Jaswant Rao and whiled away his time in frivolous amusements like kite-flying and jackal-hunting.³² Under the circumstances the downfall of Kashi Rao appeared to be imminent.

After defeating the two battalions of Dudrence, Jaswant Rao and Mir Khan encamped on the battlefield near Kasraod for the night and next morning marched in the direction of Maheshwar.³³ Jaswant wrote to Bharmal Holkar, an old minister of Ahalya Bai, to provide boats for enabling his troops to cross the Narmada.

29. Waqai-Holkar, ff. 66a-67a.

30. Ibid., f. 63a.

31. S.P.D., XXXI, 18.

32. Persian news-letters in British Museum Oriental, 4608, 4609.

33. Waqai-Holkar, f. 67b; Malcolm, Memoirs of Central India, Vol. I, p. 204.

Bharmal at first hesitated, but later on agreed as Jaswant threatened to sack Maheshwar.³⁴ When Dudreneé fell back on Indore, the officers of Kashi Rao gave up all plans of opposing Jaswant Rao Holkar.³⁵ Having arrived at Maheshwar, Jaswant ascended the family throne early in January, 1799, in the capacity of the Regent.³⁶ He took nearly three lakhs as nazrana from Maheshwar.³⁷ Basawan Lal writes, "Immense resources in money, goods, elephants, horses, guns, family jewels and forts came now at once into the possession of Jaswant Rao Holkar".³⁸ Jaswant Rao was careful enough not to attempt direct usurpation of the chief authority in the Holkar State. He, therefore, coined money in the name of Khande Rao Holkar II, the infant son of Malhar Rao Holkar II, and the legitimate heir after Kashi Rao Holkar.³⁹ He appealed to Moroba Fadnavis to Peshwa Baji Rao II to recognise Khande Rao II as the lawful head of the House of Holkar with Jaswant Rao himself as his regent and the working head of the State.⁴⁰

The city of Maheshwar wore a festive look on the occasion of Jaswant's accession to power. He was hailed as the saviour of the powers and dignity of the house of Holkar as against Kashi Rao Holkar who had made a base surrender to their hereditary rival.⁴¹ The whole city was illuminated; tasteful boats of gay colours were prepared and were filled with musicians and

34. Basawan Lal, Tr., p. 102.

35. Sarkar, Fall of the Mughal Empire, Vol. IV, p. 169.

36. Ibid.

37. Waqai-Holkar, f. 67b.

38. Basawan Lal, Tr., p. 102.

39. Malcolm, Memoirs of Central India, Vol. I, p. 206; Duff, Vol. II, p. 195.

40. Holkarshaichya Itihasanchi Sadhane, Vol. II, p. 18.

41. Sarkar, Fall of the Mughal Empire, Vol., IV, p. 167.

'bewitching women who with their dances and songs would have made prize of the hearts of hermits a hundred years old'.⁴² Jaswant distributed nearly 700 costly robes of honour, shawls, scarfs (shela) and turbans (pagota) to his followers according to their rank.⁴³ He made Mir Khan sit on the 'musnad' by his side,⁴⁴ conferred the title of Nawab on him, assigned the parganah of Seronj to him and also rewarded him with a khilat, an elephant, a horse and some jewels.⁴⁵ Karam Din Khan and 400 men of his contingent received robes of honour. Saadat Khan, the blind brother of Jafar Ali Khan, was given a Palki and a village yielding Rs. 12,000 annually. Bhawani Shankar received a pearl necklace and a palki (palanquin). He was also appointed the Bakshi of the entire army, but as he did not know much of Marathi, that office was conferred on Kushaba Bakshi on Bhawani Shankar's own suggestion.⁴⁶

During his stay at Maheshwar Jaswant's forces were raised to nearly 8,000 horse and 15,000 foot. Abdur Rahman of Shahjahanpur with 200 horse and 400 foot, and a sardar of the gosains at the head of 1200 infantry were newly enlisted.⁴⁷ Jaswant made an attempt to establish order and regularity of some kind in his army. He divided the muslim horsemen into three classes (1) To the 'first-sized horse' he gave five hundred rupees per annum (2) to the second class three hundred (3) to the third class two hundred and fifty.⁴⁸ The corresponding ranks of the

42. Basawan Lal, Tr., p. 102.

43. Wagai-Holkar, f. 68a.

44. Basawan Lal, Tr., p. 102.

45. Wagai-Holkar, f. 69a; Malcolm, Memoirs of Central India, Vol. I, p. 206.

46. Wagai-Holkar, ff. 68b-69a.

47. Ibid., f. 69b.

48. Malcolm, Memoirs of Central India, Vol. I, p. 206. Holkarshahichya Ithasanchi Sadhane, Vol. II, p. 17.

Hindus were allowed only four hundred, two hundred and ^{one} hundred and fifty rupees per mensem. It is said that Mir Khan's influence was responsible for this difference in emoluments. "The real cause", as Malcolm remarks, "appears to have been a desire to accomodate the loose habits of his Mahratta followers."⁴⁹ In a letter to Bharmal Holkar, Jaswant expressed his desire 'to respect old usages' in the Holkar State.⁵⁰ He paid homage to the memory of Ahalya Bai by constructing a chhatra in her name.⁵¹ He also put an end to the ravages of the Bhiks in the Khasgi villages; those who sheltered the latter were punished.⁵² Thus when Jaswant appeared to be the unchallenged master of the state, news spread that Dudrence was collecting an army to fight him.

3. Dudrence defeats Jaswant Rao at Chauli.

Jaswant Rao Holkar had courted the co-operation of Dudrence; but the latter's replies were evasive. Dudrence sent one Narso Pandit to Jaswant, outwardly to strengthen friendship but secretly to get news of the number of his troops.⁵³ He completed his war-preparations at Indore and at the beginning of March, 1799, advanced with six battalions and a large body of cavalry to Chauli which was situated six miles north-east of Maheshwar.⁵⁴

Jaswant had never believed in the false pretences of fidelity made by Dudrence; he had even suggested the capture of the passes of Jamghat and Samrurghat. The plan had not materialised due to

49. Malcolm, *Memoirs of Central India*, Vol. I, p. 206.

50. *Holkarshahichya Itihasanchi Sadhane*, Vol. II, p. 21.

51. *Ibid.*, p. 19.

52. *Ibid.*, p. 23.

53. *Wagai-Holkar*, f. 70a.

54. Sarker, *Fall of Mughal Empire*, Vol. IV, p. 170.

indolence and reluctance of his officers.⁵⁵ Mir Khan had approved of Jaswant's plan but had not taken any initiative in the matter as the latter had begun to tamper with Mir Khan's followers. Jaswant knowing the cause of Mir Khan's annoyance apologised to him saying, "the enemy are now coming in strength, without your zealous service and assistance I have no hope."⁵⁶ As Dudrence advanced to Chauli, Jaswant at first thought of retiring from Maheshwar. His flagging zeal, however, revived when Mir Khan assured him of every assistance.

Dudrence had encamped at the top of the Ghat near Chauli. Jaswant and Mir Khan moved out of Maheshwar and encamped in the valley below the Ghat. The same evening Sham Rao Mare began skirmishing with a party of Dudrence and after some time was joined by Jaswant Rao himself, who fought 'with sword and spear like another Rustam and did great execution'.⁵⁷ Mir Khan followed Jaswant, immediately charged the rear of the enemy and himself killed many soldiers. Fighting was difficult because it was not possible to distinguish friend from foe in darkness. As grape shot rained incessantly from the guns of Dudrence's battalions, Jaswant's infantry being mostly raw levies gave way.⁵⁸ The infantry of Jaswant, consisting mostly of wild Gosain monks, were driven out of their trenches with slaughter by plummet, the lieutenant and son-in-law of Dudrence.⁵⁹ Jaswant's cavalry was also mown down by the grape shot of the Frenchman's well-served artillery. Kale Khan, one of the able officers of Jaswant, was killed in action.

55. Waqai-Holkar, f. 69b.

56. Basawan Lal, Tr., p. 104.

57. Ibid., pp. 105-106.

58. Ibid., p. 107.

59. Waqai-Holkar, f. 70b.

The casualties on the side of the Holkar were indeed heavy. Jaswant Rao, Mir Khan and Bhawani Shankar fell back on Maheshwar and most of their troops fled away to Dharampuri, a village on the Narmada, 15 miles west of Maheshwar.⁶⁰ To this place Jaswant himself retired after taking away as much of Ahalya Bai's jewels and treasures from Maheshwar as he could transport.⁶¹ This was Jaswant Rao Holkar's first defeat and was also a signal disaster for him.⁶²

4. Submission of Dudrence.

The triumph of Dudrence over Jaswant Rao Holkar at Chauli was shortlived. Having moved in to Maheshwar, Dudrence 'stretched out his hand in violence and plunder on the inhabitants of the city'.⁶³ He seized as much of the state treasure as he could lay hands on.

After his defeat at Chauli Jaswant rapidly increased his army by new enlistment of soldiers. Hurmat Khan, Buland Khan and Akbar Khan from Gujarat with 400 cavalry and 2000 infantry were employed. Guja Kumbar with a contingent of 4000 horses and Krishnaji Mahadik entered his service.⁶⁴ Having strengthened his army Jaswant ordered his soldiers to plunder the baggage of Dudrence left at Indore.⁶⁵ Against Dudrence himself Jaswant used blockade. His men held in force the passes of Jamghat and

60. Waqai-Holkar, f. 71a.

61. Basawan Lal, Tr., p. 108.

62. Sarkar, Fall of Mughal Empire, Vol. IV, p. 170.

63. Waqai-Holkar, f. 71a.

64. Ibid., f. 72b.

65. Ibid.

Samrurghat, the link between Maheshwar and Indore, and thus cut off Dudrence's supplies.⁶⁶ Kusaba Bakshi, Chimna Bhau and Bhawani Shankar with 1000 horse and 2000 foot performed this duty.⁶⁷ Jaswant was well aware that the services of the Bhils would be most useful for keeping control over Samrurghat.⁶⁸ He employed Maqsd Shah for this purpose. Maqsd Shah was a darvish most ardently obeyed by the Bhils.⁶⁹

Dudrence's provisions ran short. While on the brink of starvation he sent Asad Beg and Najib Khan as his envoys to Jaswant with this message, "I have committed these acts of defiance to you simply out of fidelity to the salt of Kashi Rao. Now that you have become supreme, this well-wisher too is willing to join you and serve you."⁷⁰ Mir Khan had taken a vow that he would not rest or 'wear a turban' until he should get better of Dudrence.⁷¹ He tampered with the Afghan horsemen in the service of Dudrence.⁷² Jaswant Rao Holkar, however, had no desire to go to extremities and he agreed to make peace as desired by Dudrence. Najib Khan and Asad Beg were sent back with khilats. Jaswant Rao sent his own agent Mir Wazir Husain to Dudrence for the confirmation of the agreement. Dudrence requested Jaswant to send Mir Khan for the purpose.⁷³ According to Basawan Lal, the real purpose of Jaswant was to lure Dudrence to his camp and then to murder him treacherously, a course of action disapproved by Mir Khan. At Last

66. Sarkar, Fall of the Mughal Empire, Vol. IV, p. 170.

67. Waqai-Holkar, f. 73a.

68. Basawan Lal, Tr., p. 108.

69. Waqai-Holkar, f. 73a.

70. Ibid.

71. Basawan Lal, Tr., p. 109.

72. Ibid.

73. Waqai-Holkar, f. 73a.

Jaswant sent Mir Khan to give assurance to Dudrence,⁷⁴ who at last acknowledged him as the lawful head of the Holkar State in April, 1799.⁷⁵ Jaswant Rao now set himself to the task of recovering the Holkar territories in Rajputana and Malwa. Dudrence was sent away to the jagir of Rampura, Tonk, Paraha and other mahals. Mohan Lal and Mirza Ibadulla Beg remained with Jaswant as the 'yakils' (agents) of Dudrence. Najib Khan and Asad Beg with 400 horse and 2000 foot were taken into his service by Jaswant Rao Holkar.⁷⁶

5. Jaswant Rao levies contributions in Malwa.

The internal resources of a small state could not possibly support the large army that Jaswant kept. He had to make predatory raids periodically in order to obtain money and supplies. After the submission of Dudrence, Mir Khan suggested to Jaswant that it would be better to separate their forces and each should levy contributions for the support of his own troops; but at the same time they should be ready to reunite in case of necessity.⁷⁷ Jaswant, thereupon, sent Mir Khan to Muhammadpur,⁷⁸ and himself went to Gonda in Dhar by way of Dipalpur.⁷⁹

In the course of his roving career Jaswant Rao plundered the country far and wide including such places as Jaora, Tarana, Rampura, Bhampura, Nawlai, Soondhwara, Rajgarh Patan, Bakaina, Shujawalpur, Ashta, Sarangpur, Akara, Barkhera, Chandtara and Satambari.⁸⁰ At Tarana he posted Wazir Husain with 500 horse and

74. Basawan Lal, Tr., p. 109.

75. Duff, Vol. II, p.195; Sarkar, Fall of the Mughal Empire, Vol. IV, p. 170.

76. Waqai-Holkar, ff. 74a-74b.

77. Basawan Lal, Tr., p. 111.

78. Waqai-Holkar, f. 74b.

79. Ibid.

80. Duff, Vol. II, p.195; Waqai-Holkar, ff. 74b-76b; Basawan Lal, Tr., p. 112.

1000 foot. Shyam Rao Mahadik was ordered to levy contributions from Rampura, Bhampura, Jaora Baraud and other places. He was also 'exalted with the command of a Paigah of 400 horse, gift of an elephant, a standard and kettledrums!⁸¹ At the village of Jarwada, Bala Rao Ingolia with 4000 horse and one campoo of Kalb Ali Khan,⁸² met Jaswant and expressed the desire for entering his service. The principal sardars of Jaswant were opposed to it on account of Bala Rao's perfidious character and heavy expenses.⁸³ Bala Rao was, however, engaged with his corps by Jaswant on a pay of 1½ lakhs of rupees per month. Jaswant Rao made an attempt to levy contributions in the Kota district. As Umed Singh, the Raja of Kota, was induced by Kashi Rao Holkar and Daulat Rao Sindhhia to refuse compliance with the demands of Jaswant Rao⁸⁴ and as Bala Rao Ingolia was also inclined to protect the Kota Raja, Jaswant Rao refrained from levying contributions in the district of Kota. He, however, succeeded in taking Rs.40,000 from Shujawalpur, Rs.1½ lakhs from Ashta, Rs.30,000 from Sarangpur and Rs.60,000 from Khargaon Batisi.⁸⁵ He also committed great ravages in the territory of Hada state on the Raja's refusal to pay blackmail.⁸⁶ At Runjhaka, Murtaza Khan with 100 troopers and 400 infantry entered the service of Jaswant Rao and received a role of honour. Qadratullah, Shujat Khan and Khwaja Qasim met Jaswant at Rajgarh Patan and were also taken into his service.⁸⁷

81. Waqai-Holkar, f. 75a.

82. Ibid.

83. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. VIII, p. 191; Sarkar, Fall of the Mughal Empire, Vol. IV, p. 171.

84. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. VIII, p. 197.

85. Waqai-Holkar, ff. 79a-82b.

86. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. VIII, Nos. 144-166.

87. Waqai-Holkar, f. 76b.

Let us turn to Mir Khan. Having taken leave of Jaswant Rao at Gonda in Dhar, Mir Khan had marched towards Muhammadpur. From Tulsaji Wagh, the kamavisdar of Muhammadpur, he took a nazrana of Rs. 5 lakhs and six elephants. He sent 2½ lakhs to Jaswant Rao and spent the other half in paying his own troops.⁸⁸ With a force of seventy thousand horse, Mir Khan levied contributions at Shujawalpur, Shahjahanpur and Bhurseea. He secured a sanad from Jaswant Rao for Rao Himmat Rao of the villages of Anandpur and Mukroda. Mir Khan also exacted sixty thousand rupees from Etawa in Sagar and also the same amount from Khumlasa.⁸⁹ Ubhaji,⁹⁰ the governor of Sagar came out with eighteen thousand infantry and four thousand cavalry to fight Mir Khan. He was driven back and compelled to retire to the town of Sagar. The siege of Sagar was now undertaken with great vigour by Mir Khan. Though the held out, the town was mercilessly looted by Mir Khan and yielded wealth amounting to nine crore of rupees.⁹¹ "Every species of insult and torture were inflicted upon the male and female inhabitants of Sagar."⁹² The excess of Mir Khan was reported to Jaswant and the latter wrote back that it was improper to engage in plunder after tribute had been collected satisfactorily.⁹³ Ubhaji applied for help to Raghuji Bhosle of Nagpur promising the surrender of Choupura Garh and Garh Mandal. Raghuji immediately sent a brigade under Beni Singh with forty thousand horse. Mir Khan was defeated in spite of a gallant fight. Beni Singh, however, was not much interested in giving Mir Khan

88. Waqai-Holkar, f. 74b.

89. Basawan Lal, Tr., p. 113.

90. According to Malcolm, Sagar was defended by Vinayak Rao (Memoirs of Central India, Vol. I, p. 207)

91. Basawan Lal, Tr., pp. 113-114.

92. Malcolm, Memoirs of Central India, Vol. I, p. 208.

93. Waqai-Holkar, f. 79a.

a chase.⁹⁴ Jaswant Rao met Mir Khan at Sironj and conferred that pargana as jagir on him. Then he marched away to the country of Girasias, took tribute from Akara, Barkhera, Chandtara and Satambari and afterwards returned to Indore by the end of the summer of 1799.⁹⁵

Jaswant Rao Holkar arrests our attention by his phenomenal rise into power. He was born in an age and in a krieg staat where a roving and raiding career brought immediate fortune and greater glory than any peaceful pursuit. The factors which contributed to his success were the incompetency of Kashi Rao Holkar, the negligence of Daulat Rao Sindhia and Jaswant Rao Holkar's own impetuous courage, relentless energy and driving power. Besides, Jaswant's alliance with Mir Khan who individually must occupy a high place amongst eminent soldiers of his time, had given a dynamic emphasis to the former's career. If we turn our gaze to the darker side of the picture and consider the devastation and widespread ravages that he wrought, we have to admit that for Malwa's misery, the responsibility lies primarily on his unpatriotic ambition.⁹⁶ The natural effect of the rise of Jaswant Rao Holkar was the unspeakable suffering of the people of Malwa who were illprepared for the storm which now burst over them after the repose of thirty years.⁹⁷

94. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. V, No.30.

95. Waqai-Holkar, f. 82a.

96. Sarkar, Fall of the Mughal Empire, Vol. IV, p. 167.

97. Malcolm, Memoirs of Central India, Vol. I, p. 214.

CHAPTER IV

Jaswant Rao Holkar's relations with Daulat Rao Sindhia (1800 to the 14th October, 1801 A.D.)

1. Origin of Sindhia - Holkar rivalry.

It is difficult to state the evils which originated from Sindhia-Holkar rivalry dating back to the times of Peshwa Bajji Rao I. It fostered internal dissensions within the Maratha Empire, weakened the Maratha confederacy, and hampered the establishment of Maratha hegemony in North India. It seems necessary to delve into the past for a while to trace the genesis and growth of Sindhia-Holkar rivalry.

The policy of Bajji Rao I was to make every Maratha chief dependent on the Poona Government. The Maratha confederacy as a system of checks and balances worked well under him. The Holkars always made the tall claim that the rise of Ranoji Sindhia could be possible due to the efforts of Malhar Rao Holkar.¹ It is historically incorrect to say that Ranoji Sindhia was an obscure figure before he came to Malwa.² His entry into Malwa affairs must have been due to Peshwa Bajji Rao I who might have thought that after the withdrawal of Udaji Pawar it was not good to leave the entire province in the hands of Malhar Rao.³ Malwa was entrusted to Holkar and Sindhia on November 2, 1731.⁴ In the

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1. Holkarshahichya Itihasanchi Sadhane, Vol. II, pp. 8-9.
 2. S.P.D. XIII, 50; XXX, 28.
 3. Singh, Malwa in Transition, p. 277.
 4. S.P.D. XIII, 54-56; XIV, 58.

settlement of December 20, 1731, the following division of the dues was made by the Peshwa:-

- (1) Peshwa = 8.5 %
- (2) Holkar = 35.0 %
- (3) Sindhia = 35.0 %
- (4) Pawar = 21.5 %

Thus Ranoji Sindhia attained a position equal to that of Holkar in Malwa and he made Ujjain his headquarters in 1735.⁵ The expansion of Maratha power in Malwa proceeded on the feudal pattern.

Sindhia and Holkar were not on good terms for some time. During the period from 1754 to 1759 the relations between the two chiefs became quite strained and the subordinates followed the lead of their respective masters.⁶ The Poona Durbar followed the imbecile policy of maintaining their hold on Malwa by encouraging this friction. Palmer's letter to Lord Wellesley, dated 2nd October, 1801 makes the point clear: "the Peshwa seems to be pursuing his accustomed policy in the contest between Daulat Rao Sindhia and Eswunt Rao Holkar by secret encouragement to both parties, but affording assistance to neither, while he expects concessions for the promise of it"⁷

The Sindhia-Holkar rivalry started as a race for obtaining power in Malwa and ended with a struggle for ascendancy in the Peshwa's Durbar at Poona.⁸ The factious fights sometimes took a serious turn and surprisingly enough a point of prestige rather than any substantial material gain was the cause of it. Their frequent

5. S.P.D. XIV, 29.

6. Rajwade, VI, p. 303; Phalke Kota papers, Vol. I, 219.

7. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. VI, p.667.

8. Owen, Wellesley's Despatches, p. 255.

occurrences disturbed the peace of the land, bred suspicion, and was bound in the end to lead ^{to} disaster. Mahadji Sindhia obtained for himself a position of prominence and dominated the affairs of North India like a colossus. He was a statesman who possessed a clear vision and wide but not impracticable ambitions. Mahadji early realised the vital importance of co-operation between the Holkars and the Sindhias for strengthening the Maratha confederacy⁹; but his lone voice of moderation and wisdom was of little avail. He refused to unite with Raghunath Rao and Gangadhar Yashwant Chandrachuda to subvert the independence of the Holkar family after the death of Malhar Rao Holkar. Unfortunately, the dominating influence of Mahadji Sindhia rankled even in the heart of the pious Ahalya Bai. She constantly egged on Tukoji Holkar to assert himself on terms of equality with Mahadji Sindhia.¹⁰ As a result, Tukoji, who was once the most intimate friend of Sindhia, became his most bitter enemy.¹¹ By 1772 their views 'dashed too much to admit of any united efforts for common service.'¹² The Poona Durbar, dominated by Nana Fadnavis, made Tukoji Holkar their instrument against Sindhia.¹³ The bitterness between the two chiefs grew more acute day by day till Tukoji Holkar suffered a crushing defeat at Lakheri. The rivalry of the two chiefs created a permanent state of tension in the Maratha State.

Pretexts for a war between Jaswant Rao Holkar and Daulat Rao Sindhia were not wanting. How could Jaswant forget that the death of his brother Malhar II and his own sad plight ^{were} mainly

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9. Malcolm, *Memoirs of Central India*, Vol. I, p. 161.
 10. *Selections from Chandrachuda Records*, p. 9.
 11. *Poona Residency Correspondence*, Vol. I, p. 73.
 12. *Ibid.*, p. 344.
 13. *Ibid.*, p. 388.

due to Daulat Rao Sindhia's 'insane desire to extinguish the power of the House of Holkar?'¹⁴ It was but natural for Jaswant Rao to make an attempt to thwart the ambition of Daulat Rao Sindhia to reduce the House of Holkar in vassalage to himself. Jaswant's phenomenal rise to power, his ascendancy at Maheshwar as the Regent of the House of Holkar, his predatory raids in Sindhia's territory and his support to the widows of Mahadji Sindhia were sufficient grounds in the eyes of Daulat Rao Sindhia to take up arms against him.

Arthur Wellesley in a letter to Major Shaw (8th October, 1803) explained the origin of the dispute between Sindhia and Holkar. According to him, the 'Peshkash' paid by the Rajput States did not only belong to Sindhia, but also to the Holkar family. Of every rupee paid, six annas belonged to the Peshwa, five to Sindhia and five to Holkar. The cause of Sindhia-Holkar dispute was that the Holkar claimed the right to collect the total amount of the Peshkash for the same number of years for which it had been collected by Sindhia.¹⁵ Arthur Wellesley's idea that this was the sole ground for the rivalry does not seem to be sound. Nor even 'Absolute Dominion' was the point of contest between the two chiefs, as Thorn¹⁶ would like us to believe. Jaswant's capture of Ujjain on the 18th July, 1801 and Sharza Rao's counter capture of Indore on the 14th October, 1801, indicated that a period of unrest and disturbance was again approaching. The genesis of the rivalry is to be found in the political psychology of the times.

14. Sarkar, Fall of the Mughal Empire, Vol. IV, p. 167.

15. Owen, Wellington's Despatches, p. 389.

16. Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, p. 53.

2. The Widows' War and Jaswant Rao Holkar.

Daulat Rao Sindhia displayed 'little of either greatness or goodness' as a ruler.¹⁷ Dull of intellect and with practically no education, he slipped into indolence. He had fallen in public esteem by his vices, low and frivolous amusements like kite-flying, jackal-hunting in the jungle outside Poona to which place he had been lured by a licentious muslim youth.¹⁸ The account of his debaucheries may be read in the news reports of Krishnaji Naik Gaekwad.¹⁹ There was a growing discontent among the subjects of Sindhia against Daulat Rao and Sharza Rao Ghatge. The latter had become supreme in the court of Daulat Rao by reason of the marriage of his daughter Baiza Bai to that prince.²⁰ Sharza Rao provoked universal indignation by his systematic torture and exactions in maharashtra. The Shenvi²¹ party headed by Lakshman Anant Lad (popularly known as Lakhwa Dada) rallied round the widows of Mahadji Sindhia - Lakshmi Bai, Yamuna Bai, Bhagirathi Bai and Kesari Bai. These ladies were held in high esteem by high and low alike for their wisdom. On the 15th May, 1798, Sharza Rao ill-treated the widows by entering their apartments, whipping them and dragging them out for being sent off to some prison fort. The supporters of the widows - Narayan Rao Bakshi, Devji Gauli, Rajaji Patil and Ranoji Patil - had already been put under arrest in the last week of March. A civil war on a vast scale now broke out against the grinding tyranny of Sharza Rao. The widows received support from Nana

17. Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, p. V.

18. British Museum Oriental, 4608, 4609.

19. S.P.D. XXXI, pp. 285, 300-302.

20. Sarkar, Fall of the Mughal Empire, Vol. IV, p. 150.

21. Ibid., p. 152.

22. Ibid., p. 142.

Fadnavis. The widows' war was temporarily over by the end of August, 1799. Nothing spectacular happened during the course of the war except the dramatic capture of the city of Ujjain by partisans of the Widows on the 15th December, 1798. When the city was recovered three months later by Daulat Rao's commander Bala Rao Ingle, Jagu Bapu and Lakhwa Dada took to a running fight. Daulat Rao Sindhia finding the people against him, put Sharza Rao in prison and pacified the widows by promising to provide for their maintenance.²³ Baloba Tatya was reappointed by Daulat Rao as his Prime Minister and Lakhwa Dada's second term of viceroyalty of Sindhia's North Indian dominion began in November, 1799.

The reconciliation between Daulat Rao and the widows proved an insincere truce. With the release of Sharza Rao on the 4th January and the arrest of Baloba Tatya on the 25th April, the Widows' War began afresh in May, 1800. Lakhwa Dada displayed once again superior resourcefulness and tenacity of purpose. He won over to his side Bhim Singh, the Raja of Marwar, but lost Ajmer to Perron's lieutenant, Louis Bourguien.²⁴ Daulat Rao having sent three regular battalions from the Deccan against the Widows then living at Burhanpur, the latter fled northwards and arrived near Maheshwar. Lakhwa Dada left Rajputana and set off for Malwa with the remnant of his army.²⁵

Jaswant Rao Holkar till then had not declared openly his inveterate hostility towards Daulat Rao Sindhia. But as the Widows

23. Sarkar, Fall of the Mughal Empire, Vol. IV, p. 141. Both Sharza Rao and his agent Fakirji Garway were arrested by two young officers of Sindhia - Filose and Hessing. (Khare, X, 4329.)

24. Sarkar, Fall of the Mughal Empire, Vol. IV, p. 173.

25. Ibid.

begged help from him,²⁶ Jaswant invited them to Maheshwar.²⁷ "He was induced to adopt this resolution partly from the accounts respecting the conduct of Sindhia at Poona and partly from the representations of Dudrence who assures Holkar that Perron has engaged to restore the districts of Rampura and Tonk to the Jaipur Raja."²⁸ According to Mohan Singh, a pact was made between Jaswant and the Widows. It was decided that Jaswant should advance a loan of two lakhs of rupees to the Widows and also help them in gaining possession of Mahadji's northern dominions; on the other hand, the Widows were to deliver twenty guns from the Ujjain arsenal to Jaswant and pay him four lakhs of rupees for his army expenses.²⁹

In spite of his friendly professions and performance of 'every rite of hospitality', Jaswant's conduct inspired little confidence in the Widows. He had sent Chimna Bhau to them with one lakh of rupees in cash and one lakh worth of clothing;³⁰ but he prudently refrained from joining them in their offensive campaigns. This was in part due to the spirited remonstrances of Perron and the knowledge that three of Sindhia's regular battalions had already crossed the Narmada without encountering any opposition.³¹ Was it wise, he must have argued, to court ruin for the sake of a mere sentiment. His mind was quickly made up.

26. Waqai-Holkar, f. 84b.

27. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. IX, p. 26.

28. Ibid.

29. Waqai-Holkar, f. 85a.

30. Ibid.

31. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. IX, p. 49, Letter from Collins to the Governor General, 26th July, 1800.

He openly declared himself on the side of Daulat Rao Sindhia when he received through Dharam Rao, Ambaji Ingle's Diwan, a seductive offer of five lakhs in case he turned against the Widows.³²

Jaswant Rao's act can be condemned on moral grounds but he was playing a safe game knowing full well that his own power was in a state of infancy. According to Mohan Singh, Jaswant Rao adopted this course when he learnt that Lakhwa Dada and the Widows were planning 'to seduce all his (Jaswant's) troops and wrest from him all the territories which he had conquered by force of arms'.³³ There does not seem much substance in this insinuation as Lakhwa Dada's position was too weak for such an endeavour.

Having chosen the side of Sindhia, Jaswant repeatedly asked Ambaji Ingle to march against the partisans of the Widows.³⁴ On the 1st November, 1800, Plumet made a surprise attack on the camp of the Widows under the instructions of Jaswant.³⁵ The Widows barely escaped with their lives and all their property was captured. Even the followers of Jaswant were chagrined at this act of treachery.³⁶ Mir Khan in a sarcastic vein complimented Jaswant Rao' on the courage and skill which had achieved so vast a conquest from helpless women.³⁷ Jaswant Rao inflicted unspeakable misery on the people of Ujjain. The cultivators were left to the mercy of his wolfish soldiers. The floors of richmen's houses were dug up in search of buried hoards and military stores were removed

32. Waqai-Holkar, f. 87a; Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. IX, p. 5.

33. Waqai-Holkar, f. 85b.

34. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. IX, p. 51.

35. Waqai-Holkar, f. 86a; Sarkar, Fall of the Mughal Empire, Vol. IV, p. 174.

36. Duff, Vol. II, p. 196; Khare, XIII, 6862; Rajadhyaksha, Letter No. 299.

37. Basawan Lal, Tr., p. 129.

from the Ujjain arsenal to the Holkar's camp.³⁸ The hoarded riches of Ujjain replenished for a time Jaswant's slender resources. Thus, Sindhia-Holkar alliance was only a temporary phase. There could be no lasting friendship between Daulat Rao Sindhia and Jaswant Rao Holkar. They never concealed their dislike for each other. Daulat Rao's troops levied contributions by raiding Holkar's villages in Malwa and Khandesh;³⁹ in reprisal, Jaswant Rao, after withdrawing from Ujjain on the 15th November, 1800, took to plundering Sindhia's possessions north of Ujjin.⁴⁰

Meanwhile, Lakhwa Dada, finding himself outnumbered by the forces of Sindhia, had marched away to the Rajgarh district to join his ally Durjan Lal Khichi.⁴¹ On the way, near Shahjahanpur, he inflicted a crushing defeat on Mir Khan's brother by a sudden night attack on the 27th November, 1800. Out of the latter's total force of 4000 horse and infantry, two hundred were reported as killed, three hundred Rohillas were taken prisoner, eleven pieces of artillery, some elephants, many camels and 300 horses fell into the victor's hands. The remnant fled to Mir Khan at Purana.⁴² Mir Khan later on succeeded in recovering his lost guns.⁴³ As Bajji Rao II, under pressure of Daulat Rao, invested Kashi Rao Holkar with the robes of the head of the Holkar State, Jaswant suspended hostilities against Lakhwa Dada.⁴⁴ Lakhwa Dada, on his part, judiciously⁴⁵ secured the neutrality of Jaswant Rao by restoring the district of Shahjahanpur to Mir Khan. With his

38. Sindheshahichya Khara Itihasa, p. 532.

39. Waqai-Holkar, f. 88b.

40. Ibid., f. 89a.

41. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. IX, p. 52.

42. Waqai-Holkar, f. 86b; Basawan Lal writes Purana as Tirana (Tr., p. 130).

43. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. IX, p. 26; Basawan Lal, Tr., p. 134.

44. Sarkar, Fall of the Mughal Empire, Vol. IV, p. 175.

45. Basawan Lal, Tr., p. 130.

meagre resources Lakhwa Dada was not expected to hold out for long. Perron's decisive victory at Seondha proved the last straw on his back. Frustrated and broken hearted he betook himself to the protection of the Maharana of Udaipur. There he died at Salumbar of a festering wound on the 7th February, 1802.⁴⁶

3. Battles of Newri and Satwas.

News began to pour in Poona regarding the atrocities committed by Jaswant Rao Holkar. Baji Rao II told Daulat Rao Sindhia that his relations with Jaswant Rao were not smooth and all that had happened at Ujjain and Indore 'was not a happy state of affairs.'⁴⁷ Daulat Rao had come to Poona on the 25th March, 1796,⁴⁸ to realise rupees 25,00,000 out of a sum of 1,25,00,000 promised by Baji Rao II for raising him to the Peshwaship.⁴⁹ Baji Rao II desired that Sindhia should go in pursuit of Jaswant Rao Holkar. Affairs, however, became so serious in Malwa as to compel Daulat Rao to proceed thither. He left Poona reluctantly on the 5th December, 1800.⁵⁰ Before his departure he had secured from the Peshwa a sum of rupees 47,00,000.⁵¹

Before leaving Poona Daulat Rao had opened negotiations with Jaswant for a compromise, but there was no sincerity behind the purpose.⁵² His purpose was to gain time partly because of the coming monsoon and partly owing to the necessity of calling in all his

46. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. IX, pp. 249-254; Gulgule Daftar, Letter of 22nd May, 1801; Fraser, Military Memoir of Skinner, Vol. I, pp. 185-187.

47. Holkarshahichya Itihasanchi Sadhane, Vol. II, p.24.

48. Bombay Political Secret Proceedings, 1796, 29th March, pp.556-557.

49. Khare, IX, 3733.

50. Sarkar, Fall of the Mughal Empire, Vol. IV, p.179.

51. Duff, Vol. II, p.308.

52. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. IX, p. XV.

detachments from far and near to meet Jaswant's formidable military strength.⁵³ Jaswant reiterated his old demands - the handing over to him of Khande Rao II, his recognition as the Diwan in the Holkar State with full authority to manage the government, the reimbursement of all that money which Daulat Rao had collected from the Holkar territory and the restoration of every village ever held by the Holkar family. Daulat Rao Sindhia being reluctant to accede to Jaswant Rao's demands, no peace could be possible. The fact that Jaswant Rao had played a treacherous part with the widows of Mahadji Sindhia at the instance of Daulat Rao should not be forgotten in this connection.⁵⁴

Lord Wellesley watched with great interest the growing tension between Jaswant Rao Holkar and Daulat Rao Sindhia. In a letter to Dundas dated the 5th March, 1800, he wrote, "The distractions of the Mahratta Empire must continue to increase until they shall be checked by foreign interference. No power in India excepting the British now possess sufficient strength to interpose with effect in these dissensions."⁵⁵ The success of Jaswant Rao Holkar was less injurious to the immediate interests of the British than that of Sindhia; but it too could not be viewed without alarm as the former's power 'would necessarily in time have generated new sources of contention'.⁵⁶

Daulat Rao was prompt to threaten Jaswant Rao Holkar but slow to act. He covered the 140 miles between the Tapti and the Narmada

53. Sarkar, Fall of the Mughal Empire, Vol. IV, p. 179.

54. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. IX, p. XV.

55. Martin, Wellesley's Despatches, Vol. I, p. 226.

56. Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, p. 52.

in 18 days, spent four weeks at Jangaon and reached Burhanpur only on the 15th February, 1801.⁵⁷ Then he whiled away precious time in attending to dance and music, tiger-shooting and kite-flying. Rains set in when he arrived at Handia on the south bank of the Narmada on the 3rd July, 1801. Here was made another halt lasting four months and a half.⁵⁸

Jaswant Rao Holkar, on his part, did not slacken efforts after his success at Ujjain. On the death of Tulsaji Wagh, Jaswant seized his treasure, 500 horses and four elephants.⁵⁹ From Mandasor he took fifty thousand rupees as nazrana. His roving light horse steadily harried Sindhia's unprotected posts in the region north of Ujjain. On the south and the west Jaswant succeeded in keeping the Holkar menace alive.⁶⁰ Hearing the approach of Sindhia, Jaswant Rao collected his troops numbering sixty to seventy thousand.⁶¹

Daulat Rao Sindhia had poor knowledge of military operations, strategy or tactics. He began to send against Jaswant Rao small isolated detachments with twenty, thirty and forty miles between each. On the 2nd May, 1801, he had despatched George Hessing with five battalions. Hessing was followed by Lieutenant MacIntyre, Filose, Captain Gautier with two of Sutherland's battalions from the First Brigade and Captain Brownrigg with a park of artillery and two more of Sutherland's battalions.⁶² Such a strategy was

57. Duff, Vol. II, p.196.

58. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. VI, 386, 389.

59. Waqai-Holkar, f. 89a.

60. Ibid., f. 90a.

61. Malcolm, Memoirs of Central India, Vol. I, p.214.

62. Compton, European Military Adventures of Hindustan (1784-1803), p. 254.

incredibly foolish. Hessing reached Ujjain without encountering any serious opposition on the 28th May, 1801.⁶³ Mac-Intyre, however, was not so fortunate. He arrived at Newri (sixteen miles north-west of the Unchaud pass) on the 25th June, 1801, with two battalions of infantry and five hundred horse.⁶⁴ Jaswant sallied out with his army to Newri. Mac-Intyre gave a good account of himself, inflicting considerable loss on the Holkar's ranks, but hopelessly outnumbered, he was compelled to lay down his arms.⁶⁵ Jaswant Rao seized 200 horses, 400 firelocks and seven small guns. Mac-Intyre along with Daji Bhau Ram, Mulchand and Raz Muhammad's son were made prisoners.⁶⁶

Captain Brownrigg was in Satwas (18 miles west of Nimawar) when the battle of Newri had taken place. Brownrigg, meeting the situation with cool courage, compelled the Pindaris of Jaswant Rao to fall back to their base in the Unchaud pass and himself wisely retreated and encamped fourteen miles south-east of Satwas. The retreat provided ample security, Nimawar being near and the Narmada protecting the rear of Brownrigg's camp.⁶⁷ His front and wings were also well protected by many ravins. Brownrigg also received reinforcements - two battalions of infantry under Devji Gauli and Sadashiv Rao. He built up a grand park of artillery.⁶⁸

63. Khare, XIII, 6871.

64. Sarkar, Fall of the Mughal Empire, Vol. IV, p. 181. Mohan Singh writes, "News came that two battalions from the campoo of Felose Sahib, under two other Firangis with Chaudhuri Sobharam had arrived at Newri for reinforcing George Hessing." (Waqai-Holkar, f. 90a).

65. Khare, XIII, 6871.

66. Sarkar, Fall of the Mughal Empire, Vol. IV, p. 181.

67. Waqai-Holkar, f. 91a.

68. Sarkar, Fall of the Mughal Empire, Vol. IV, p. 182.

It appears that Jaswant Rao Holkar did not bother much about the advantages of Brownrigg's position and wanted to deliver on him a swift and decisive blow. According to Compton, Jaswant had an immense numerical superiority over Brownrigg. His army consisted of 14 regular battalions under Plumet, 5000 Rohillas, 50,000 Maratha cavalry, 27 heavy guns and 42 field pieces.⁶⁹ After occupying Satwas on the 4th July, 1801, Jaswant detached Plumet and Kushaba Bakshi with four battalions of trained infantry, a cavalry force and eight guns in hot pursuit of the retreating army.⁷⁰ The numerous small palas made the favourite cavalry charge of Holkar well-nigh impossible. Plumet's vigorous charge shook the enemy, but Brownrigg's battalions now began to shower on them volleys of grape. A 'mingled fighting' took place for two hours. Jaswant's men found it very difficult to withstand the heavy discharge of grape.⁷¹ Plumet was wounded after a gallant fight and Jaswant in vain tried to regain the ground lost. After recovering six of his eight guns, Jaswant withdrew his troops and retreated to Satwas. According to a news-writer in Sindhia's camp, three officers and about five hundred men were slain on Holkar's side. On Brownrigg's side, 107 men were reported as killed or wounded including Lt. Rowbotham.⁷²

69. Compton, *European Military Adventurers of Hindustan (1784-1803)*, p. 254.

70. *Waqai-Holkar*, f. 91a.

71. *Ibid.*, f. 91b.

72. Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol. IV, p.182. According to Grant Duff, in this action Dewajee Gokla, an officer of rank, Lt. Rowbotham and 300 men were killed on the ~~part~~ ^{part} of Sindhia. Holkar's loss was three times that number. (Duff, Vol. II, p.198.)

4. Jaswant Rao Holkar captures Ujjain (18th July, 1801).

Undeterred by the reverse at Satwas, Jaswant began to devise new ways to meet his enemies. Originality and boldness of plan, an eye for strategic situations and the rapidity of movement enabled him to redeem his honour only 13 days after the reverse suffered at the hands of Brownrigg.

George Hessing with six battalions of Sindhia arrived at Ujjain on the 28th May, 1801.⁷³ The city could provide him neither security nor ample food. There was no fort in Ujjain in the true sense and the city had already been laid waste by Jaswant.⁷⁴ Hessing attempted a futile night attack on the troops under Bhawani Shankar at Muhammadpur and then took post in the unfinished fort of Bhairongath, three miles north of Ujjain.⁷⁵

On his side, Jaswant fell back on Indore to gain fresh strength. Mir Khan with his Pindari hordes constantly harried Chintaman Atmaram Wakde who was trying his best to unhold Sindhia's authority in Shujawalpur.⁷⁶ Jaswant Rao, after maturing his plans of attack on Ujjain, called upon Mir Khan to join him promptly. Mir Khan baffled the attempt made by Hessing and Wakde to effect a junction, gave them a hot chase and finally came like a whirlwind to the east of the city of Ujjain in the afternoon of the 17th July, 1801.⁷⁷ Jaswant Rao Holkar had already taken a position in

73. Waqai-Holkar, f. 89b.

74. Sarkar, Fall of the Mughal Empire, Vol. IV, p.186.

75. Waqai-Holkar, f.90a.

76. Basawan Lal, Tr., p.136. Mohan Singh writes Chintaman Wakde as Balwant Rao Wankre (Waqai-Holkar, f. 91 b.)

77. Sarkar, Fall of the Mughal Empire, Vol IV, p.183. According to Compton, on the 2nd July, 1801, the combined force of Jaswant Rao and Mir Khan moved to the city of Ujjain (p.255).

the southern part of the city on the same day at noon. His attempt to surprise Hessing failed as the Sindhian detachment had got the alarm and had taken position between Goga Shah's hillock and Ankpata with their backs turned towards the city-walls.⁷⁸ Sindhia, moreover, had superior artillery.⁷⁹

Jaswant Rao did not have rest that night. During the night he held a council of war, pushed up Mir Khan's corps, the Blumet campoo commanded by M. Fleury and the Maharaj campoo and himself rode up to his vanguard under the command of Kushaba Bakshi.⁸⁰ Throughout the attack he himself was the moving spirit.⁸¹ Sir J.N. Sarkar rightly remarks that Herbert Compton is "wrong in ascribing the conception of the attack on Ujjain to Amir Khan - whose bold initiative alone made 'Holkar pluck up heart' - as the timing of the movements of the two branches of Holkar's army and even the assertion of Mir Khan's eulogist, prove that the plan originated in Jaswant's brain."⁸²

Next morning (18th July, 1801),⁸³ Jaswant Rao began the battle by sending forward his infantry. The well-served guns of Sindhia showered grape upon their dense mass and compelled them to take shelter with Mir Khan. The Pathan horse of Holkar came on first at a slow gallop which increased in speed as they approached the enemy. Hessing's guns began to fire upon them with perfect accuracy.

78. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. IX, No. 28.

79. Waqai-Holkar, f. 92a.

80. Ibid.

81. Basawan Lal, Tr., p.138; Waqai-Holkar, f. 92a.

82. Sarkar, Fall of the Mughal Empire, Vol. IV, p.185; Compton, European Military Adventurers of Hindustan, p. 255.

83. Holkarshahichya Itihasanchi Sadhane, Vol. II, p.31; Khare, XIII, 6872.

But just then the rain came in a torrent 'like Noah's flood' and put out of action the muskets and the cannon. The battle ground was turned into a quagmire.⁸⁴ Jaswant took full advantage of this God-send opportunity. The Pathans, the Deccani horse and the Pindaris poured like a torrent over Hessing's corps. As Mohan Singh writes, "From one side the Maharaj campoo and from another side Plumet Sahib and from a third side Amir Khan delivered charges and made heroic exertions"⁸⁵ A fight to the finish ensued. No escape was possible from Holkar's 'long spears' and none was sought. Hessing's sepoys fought⁸⁶ till the last man was killed.

Ragho Ballab, the kamavisdar of Kukarmundha, sent Baji Rao II a report about this severely contested battle.⁸⁷ Hessing's defeat was complete, and his loss was very heavy. Out of six infantry battalions and 3,000 to 3,500 horse on Sindhia's side, two thousand men were reported killed or wounded. The Deccan horse managed to escape.⁸⁸ Of the 12 officers killed on Sindhia's side were Lt. John Macpherson, John Graham, Lt. Edward Montague, Lt. Doolan, Ensigns Haddon, Urquhart, Lt. Lany and Lt. Meadows. Amongst the wounded were Lt. Humphrestone, Captain Dupont and Major Deridon.⁸⁹

84. Waqai-Holkar, f. 92a; Sarkar, Fall of the Mughal Empire, Vol. IV, p. 184.

85. Waqai-Holkar, f. 92a.

86. Holkarshahichya Itihasanchi Sadhane, Vol. II, No. 38. Compton is wrong in saying that Hessing behaved in a most cowardly manner, having fled the field at an stage of the action (p. 255).

87. S.P.D. XXXI, 31. "येशवंतराव होलकर व सिंदी यांची लढाई हांड्याचे घाटानजीक जवळी. आज तेरावा दिवस आहे. तरवारीसी लढवारी मिळोन सातबर लढाई जाली. बहुत मनुष्य उमय दुरुचे पडले."

88. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. IX, 28.

89. Compton, European Military Adventurers of Hindustan, p. 250. According to Duff, of eleven officers under Hessing seven were killed (Vol. II, p. 197).

According to Basawan Lal, about two hundred Europeans of Hessian's brigade were killed in this battle. Chintaman Wakde was reported killed. An immense booty consisting of stores,⁹⁰ elephants, horses, 'kettledrums and standards' fell into the hands of Jaswant in addition to thirty pieces of cannon.⁹¹ "All our soldiers", writes Mohan Singh, "grew rich on the spoils of the enemy."⁹²

Having encamped for three days at Udasa's Tank, three miles north of the city, Jaswant Rao took up his residence in Sindhia's beautiful palace at Ujjain.⁹³ He now adopted the 'Nadir Shahi mode of extortion'⁹⁴ and demanded from the opulent citizens of Ujjain 15 lakhs of rupees as war indemnity.⁹⁵ He favoured the Fagirs, but was very severe with the Brahmanas. Women were spared molestation.⁹⁶ The poorer population of Ujjain had to face starvation and many of them perished of hunger. Jaswant himself got little out of the city: "His government got less than an eighth part of what was levied from the citizens, all the rest being consumed by his officers"⁹⁷

5. Sharza Rao defeats Jaswant Rao at Indore (October, 1801).

The July shower had brought victory to Jaswant on the 18th as related above. After that neither Sindhia nor Jaswant was eager to come to grips. Heavy rains made the river unfordable, the roads

90. Khare, XIII, 6872.

91. Basawan Lal, Tr., p.138.

92. Waqai-Holkar, f.92b.

93. Ibid; Sarkar, Fall of the Mughal Empire, Vol. IV, p. 185.

94. Malcolm, Memoirs of Central India, Vol. I, p.215.

95. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. IX, p. 58. Letter of Collins to the Governor General, 26th August, 1801.

96. Holkarshahichya Itihasanchi Sadhane, Vol. II, p.36.

97. Sarkar, Fall of the Mughal Empire, Vol. IV, p. 185.

impassable and campaigning impossible. For the next one and a half month, Daulat Rao sulked over his defeat at Ujjain⁹⁸ and sent an urgent message to Sharza Rao Ghatge to repair to his side.⁹⁹

In a letter to the Governor General, dated the 13th April, 1798, Palmer, who had succeeded Malet as the English Resident at Poona, described Sharza Rao as 'as fit an instrument for rapine as can be found'.¹⁰⁰ This wicked favourite of Sindhia was his father-in-law as well as his chief counsellor.¹⁰¹ Sharza Rao was possessed of considerable military talents, practical turn of mind and quick decision.¹⁰² But these virtues were put to perverse use. Poona had witnessed a reign of terror for three months while Sharza Rao was in charge of collection of tributes on behalf of Sindhia.¹⁰³ Daulat Rao Sindhia had left him at Poona with four battalions and ten thousand horse. After the crushing defeat of Hessian at Ujjain, Sindhia sent a message to Sharza Rao to join him without loss of time. Sharza Rao left Poona on the morning of the 28th June and¹⁰⁴ joined Daulat Rao's camp at Handia on the 20th of August.¹⁰⁵

Sharza Rao's immediate concern was to form a plan of action and to bring together the different limbs of Sindhia's vast sprawling army. He joined Brownrigg on the 1st October, 1801. His army consisted of 14 battalions of Sutherland, 6 battalions of Felose, 6 battalions of Brownrigg, 25,000 cavalry,¹⁰⁶ Karim Khan and Chetoo

98. Bagawan Lal, Tr., p.139.

99. Bengal Secret Political Consultations, 1801, 23rd July.

100. Home Miscellaneous Series, 573, p. 21.

101. Khare, XIII, 6877.

102. Sarkar, Fall of the Mughal Empire, Vol. IV, p. 186.

103. Home Miscellaneous Series, 573, p. 21; Khare, X, 4208, 4210.

104. Bengal Secret Political Consultations, 1801, 23rd July.

105. Sarkar, Fall of the Mughal Empire, Vol. IV, p. 186.

106. Waqai-Holkar, f. 96a; Duff, Vol. II, p.201.

Khan's Pindaris making all together not less than fifty or sixty thousand men.¹⁰⁷ With the clearing of the skies Sindhia's brass guns - well known for mobility, efficiency and rapidity - were expected to play a vital role in the forthcoming battles. Sharza Rao's other gain at this time was the seduction of chevalier Dudrence and his son-in-law Plumet from Holkar's service.¹⁰⁸

Jaswant Rao Holkar had never believed in the fidelity of Dudrence and 'wished to suppress the sahib by any means possible'.¹⁰⁹ Malcolm is wrong when he says that it was Dudrence who won victory for Jaswant at Ujjain. "Dudrence neither arrived before the late battle nor after it."¹¹⁰ Major R.L. Ambrose, an English officer in Jaswant Rao's service, writes, "So highly irritated was he (Jaswant) that he never mentioned the country without signs of abhorrence, and it was his express order to the commanders of brigades subsequently appointed, that on no account whatever should they afford employment to individuals of a nation by him entitled the Duggabaz or Faithless".¹¹¹

According to Malcolm, Jaswant Rao Holkar thinking his light troops sufficient, appears to have underrated his enemy after the Battle of Ujjain.¹¹² Had it been so, Jaswant would not have hastened to Indore on hearing the approach of Sharza Rao.¹¹³ Jaswant left Chimna Bhau at Ujjain with a small force, and himself

107. Basawan Lal, Tr., 139.

108. Waqai-Holkar, f. 93b.

109. Ibid., f. 77b.

110. Ibid., f. 93b.

111. R.L. Ambrose's pamphlet in Appendix of Compton's European Military Adventurers of Hindustan.

112. Malcolm, Memoirs of Central India, Vol. I, p.217.

113. Basawan Lal, Tr., p.140; Waqai-Holkar, f. 96a.

encamped at Khazrani, a mile north-east of Indore.¹¹⁴ His position had been considerably weakened by the desertion of Dudrence and Plumet though the brigades of these two officers continued in Holkar's pay and Shammat Khan with 200 horse and Fateh Singh Mane with 400 troopers were taken into service.¹¹⁵

Sharza Rao did not have any difficulty in occupying Ujjain; and without losing any time he advanced methodically and with lightning speed towards Indore along with Brownrigg.¹¹⁶ The cool-headed experienced Irish officer formed his men into a huge column with baggage in the centre. The whole column was protected by artillery in front and flanks. The 'ghanimi' tactics of Holkar proved futile against the cannon-balls of Brownrigg. The Kota news writer in Sindhia's camp reported, "He can not make a stand before our guns and our troops are chasing him back".¹¹⁷

On the 5th October, 1801, the scene of action shifted to the plain enclosed by the Sipra and the Kan rivers north of Indore.¹¹⁸ For nine days the Holkar cavalry with their Cossack tactics merely hovered round the compact formation of Brownrigg, beyond the range of its fire.¹¹⁹ On the 11th of October was undertaken that fierce charge which had been the arch ambition of Jaswant for long. Filose and his men, unable to withstand it, returned in confusion to Brownrigg's position.¹²⁰ Sharza Rao charged Filose with treason and cowardice. Filose was so deeply hurt by the filthy abuses of Sharza

114. Waqai-Holkar, f. 96a.

115. Ibid., f. 94a.

116. Holkarshahichya Itihasanchi Sadhane, Vol. II, 47.

117. Gulgule Letter of 19th October, 1801.

118. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, No. 33.

119. Waqai-Holkar, f. 96a.

120. Ibid.

Rao, that he cut down his own throat.¹²¹ Jaswant, however, could not reap full advantage of the situation as his gallant charge did not receive the required support from the artillery. Brownrigg with 'strength in reserve' turned this weakness of the enemy to his advantage. With a ~~hand~~^{of} grape shot and bullet he threw the enemy back with heavy loss. Jaswant displayed great personal courage when he was charged by fifty of Sindhia's cavalry. He gallantly stood his ground with only five companions and saved himself.¹²²

The decisive battle came on the 14th October, 1801.¹²³ Jaswant held a council of war just before the battle. Bhawani Shankar advised him 'to lead the families and his camp and baggage to some place of safety and then engage again fighting with a composed mind.' Harnath Chela, an inexperienced officer in charge of Holkar's campoo troops, proposed that they should fight a pitched battle. This suggestion found favour with Jaswant Rao.¹²⁴

Sending his family back to Maheshwar¹²⁵ Jaswant took post under cover of the artillery behind a deep ditch.¹²⁶ He directed Mir Khan and Bhawani Shankar to move out of the camp at night with fifteen thousand men to deliver an attack on the enemy's rear in the early part of the ensuing day from a point about 6 miles from Jaswant Rao's position. A similar charge was to be made by Jaswant

121. Waqai-Holkar, f. 96b; Compton, European Military Adventurers of Hindustan, p.352.

122. Waqai-Holkar, f. 97a.

123. Khare, XIII, 6883.

124. Waqai-Holkar, f. 97b.

125. Ibid.

126. Basawan Lal, Tr., p.141.

himself and the sound of a gun was to be the signal for this simultaneous charge.¹²⁷

The fighting raged throughout the next day. The fire of the Sindhia's guns was mainly directed towards the Holkar's campoo under Harnath Chela and the latter shortly after took to flight. None could stand before such well-directed fire at close range. By this time alarm had spread throughout Jaswant's ranks. The Pindari horsemen, forming the rear of his army, at first vacillated and then fled.¹²⁸ Meanwhile, the division under Mir Khan was hard pressed by Sharza Rao. Jaswant Rao advanced to bring him relief. He succeeded in wresting back three of his abandoned guns by a desperate counter-charge,¹²⁹ but failed to change the result of the battle. Mir Khan also rushed into the thick of the battle. As his horse Barchee Bahadur was killed, his nephew, Saleh Muhammad, dismounted and gave his own horse to him.¹³⁰ Taking advantage of this confusion, Ghatge charged and threw the entire wing into disorder. Brownrigg's volleys of grape did huge massacre amongst the confused mass of Holkar's infantry. All the guns of Jaswant numbering more than one hundred, his camp and stores were captured.¹³¹ According to Malcolm, the poor show of Holkar's infantry and the treachery of his artillery men were the real causes of Ghatge's victory.¹³² The battle of Indore, no doubt proved the superiority of artillery over other arms.

127. Malcolm, *Memoirs of Central India*, Vol. I, p. 218; Basawan Lal, Tr., p. 142.

128. Waghai-Holkar, f. 98a.

129. Ibid.

130. Basawan Lal, Tr., p. 143. According to Malcolm, Mir Khan set a bad example to his followers by seeking shelter of some tree. (Vol. I, p. 218.)

131. Waghai-Holkar, f. 98a.

132. Malcolm, *Memoirs of Central India*, Vol. I, p. 218.

Sharza Rao then took possession of the city of Indore by defeating Guja Kumbar and Krishnaji Mahadik who were holding it obstinately for Jaswant Rao Holkar. Guja was slain and Krishnaji was put to flight.¹³³ Sharza Rao began his 'dreadful acts of wanton and barbarous cruelty'¹³⁴ in the city of Indore. The citizens offered to pay him 15 lakhs, but he demanded more. For two days the soldiers sacked the city, dug up the floors and reduced to ashes some houses. According to Malcolm, between four and five thousand persons were killed.¹³⁵ Even Daulat Rao Sindhia did not approve this insane revenge and on the third day order was restored by the highest authorities.¹³⁶

The loss of Indore was, however, not the end of Jaswant Rao Holkar. He 'still possessed sufficient means to create great distress'¹³⁷ in Malwa. His roving campaigns were most elusive and Daulat Rao Sindhia later on realised that he was sinking deeper and deeper into the quick-sand of his war against Jaswant Rao Holkar.

133. Waqai-Holkar, f. 99b.

134. Duff, Vol. II, p.201.

135. Malcolm, Memoirs of Central India, Vol. I, p.219.

136. Waqai-Holkar, f. 99b.

137. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. IX, Letter of Collins to the Governor General, 30th October, 1801.

CHAPTER V

A year of desultory warfare (October, 1801 - October, 1802)

1. Causes of Sindhia's failure to follow up the victory at Indore.

Jaswant Rao Holkar's ambition had climbed a height where it was difficult to stand with firmness and also impossible to fall with instant destruction. Skinner thinks that had Daulat Rao Sindhia followed up his victory at Indore, Jaswant Rao Holkar would have been completely annihilated.¹ According to Duff, Sindhia did not do so as he thought that Jaswant had been completely humbled.² The truth is that though beaten Jaswant was not completely crushed at Indore, and he was still potent for much mischief in future. Daulat Rao Sindhia was fully aware of this fact and that is why he opened negotiations with him for peace.³ Temperamentally also Daulat Rao Sindhia was not the man who could make a sustained effort for defeating enemies and conquering fresh territory. Seldom did he come to the field. Luxury had enervated his vigour and debauchery had adversely affected his constitution. Most of his time was wasted in frivolous amusements⁴ like dancing, kite-flying, jackal-hunting and enjoying the sight of crocodiles. Not much could be expected from such a man. His four weeks unnecessary halt at Jamgaon (23rd December, 1800 to 19th January, 1801)

1. Fraser, Military Memoir of Skinner, Vol. I, p.197.

2. Duff, Vol. II, p.201.

3. Wagai-Holkar, f. 100a.

4. S.P.D. XXXI, 285, 301. As Krishnaji Gaikwad writes, " कलावंतनीचा

नाच विडे अंतर गुलाब सायंकालपर्यंत जाते. सायंकालचे सगळे बागात लितर व

खरगोस यांची तिकार करून दिन अस्तमान स्वारी वाड्यात आली." (S.P.D. XXXI, 285, 301.)

greatly weakened his military position in Malwa.⁵ ~~Chowdhury's~~ account gives a glimpse of Sindhia's camp: "the whole army then presented the appearance rather of a rustic city than a camp and reminded us of that which is described by Gibbon as the residence of Attila in the wilds of Germany."⁶

Daulat Rao Sindhia had recklessly increased his army and a large sum of money was required for its upkeep. Shortage of money led to everyday mutiny among his long unpaid soldiery.⁷ Mahadji Sindhia had left his successor nothing but a legacy of debt. The war indemnity promised by the Nizam at Khairabad could only be realised through a regular invasion of his dominions; and as regards the fruits of the Settlement of September, 1793, not even a small proportion of the five crores promised to him had been paid by the Peshwa.⁸ Without any education and without any talent for revenue organisation they left the management of this important branch of administration to corrupt Brahman Diwans and no less corrupt Prabhu clerks. Mahadji Sindhia constantly changed his Diwan in order that the collections ^{might} improve. In spite of injustice and extortion the actual collection never rose higher than one-tenth of the standard revenue in many places.⁹ Twining has left us a gloomy picture of administrative disorder, depleted revenues, ruin of agriculture, widespread brigandage and destruction of population in 1794 in the regions administered by Sindhia.¹⁰

5. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. VI, 386, 389; Sarkar, Fall of the Mughal Empire, Vol. IV, p.179.

6. ~~Chowdhury's~~ Letters from a Maratha Camp (ed. Duff.) Vol. IV, p.22.

7. S.P.D. XXXI, 314, 315, 316; Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. VIII, 74.

8. Sarkar, Fall of the Mughal Empire, Vol. IV, p.150.

9. Sardesai, Historical Papers relating to Mahadji Sindhia, p.607.

10. Twining, Travels in India, pp. 285-288.

The utter lack of money was sometimes aggravated by Daulat Rao's short-sighted parsimony. Captain Broughton wrote from Sindhia's camp - "While Sindhia is daily submitting to these and similar insults (from his starving unpaid soldiery and servants) he possesses a privy purse, stocked, it is said, to the amount of fifty lakhs, which no distress either to himself or his troops is sufficiently powerful to induce him to violate, it being an established rule to put as much possible into it, but never to take anything out."¹¹

Daulat Rao Sindhia's repeated acts of treachery completely disgusted and alarmed the old adherents of his family. Yashvantrao Shivaji and Dhondiba Pagnis had their noses and ears cut off and then were put to death. Narayan Rao Bakshi was blown up by rockets 'like a kite in flight'. On the 31st May, 1800, Tulaji Sindhia and Manaji Wable were blown away from the mouth of a gun. Baloba, Sadashiv Malhar, Krishnoba Modi, Deviji Gauli were sent to Ahmadnagar for detention. As a result of this incredibly foolish policy all sane element in his administration was wiped out.¹² Daulat Rao's greatest loss was Lakhwa Dada - "the best Maratha general of his time."¹³ Had there been a Lakhwa Dada on the side of Sindhia, the battle of Indore would have sealed the fate of the Holkar once for all.

Besides indolence and cruelty there were other practical difficulties which stopped Sindhia from taking full advantage of his

11. Letters from a Maratha camp, p.106.

12. Sardesai, New History of the Marathas, Vol. III, p.355.

13. Fraser, Military Memoir of Skinner, Vol. I, p.124.

victory at Indore. For the complete annihilation of Jaswant Rao a concerted effort was needed but this could not be possible. In October, 1801, he had to detain a strong detachment in Mewar in order to oppose Lakhwa Dada who was creating havoc in that region.¹⁴ It was exactly at that time that Perron had to leave for Northern India to deal with the Sikhs and George Thomas.¹⁵ Daulat Rao could not forget for a moment that Jaswant Rao was his natural enemy and would seize every opportunity to harm him, yet he was not in a position to take effective steps against him.

2. Failure of negotiations between Daulat Rao Sindhia and Jaswant Rao Holkar.

The letter of Bharmal Holkar to Govind Raghunath Ganu, dated the 20th June, 1801, clearly shows that all thoughtful and prudent ministers and every well-wisher of Maharashtra realised that it was restoration of peace between Sindhia and Holkar that could put an end to anarchy, rapine and suffering that prevailed in the unhappy land.¹⁶ The reconciliation was felt to be all the more necessary in view of the rapid expansion of British power in India.¹⁷ Accommodating spirit and some sacrifice of material interests ^{WOTC} ~~was~~ needed for avoiding the clash, but this both parties sadly lacked. Lacking statesmanship as he did Baji Rao II watched with considerable interest and evidently with secret pleasure the severely contested battles between Sindhia and Holkar. The excuse that he offered for not bringing about a reconciliation between

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14. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. IX, Letter of Collins to the Governor General, the 5th October, 1801.
 15. Francklin, Military Memoir of George Thomas, pp. 124-133.
 16. Holkarshahichya Itihasachi Sadhane, Vol. II, p.28.
 17. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p.4.

them was: "It was impossible to compel Sindhia to make friends with Holkar at the cost of what he would have regarded as the loss of honour and fortune."¹⁸ The fact is that the Peshwa was all through playing a double game. After Jaswant's victory at the battle of Ujjain, Bajji Rao II had desired to use him against Sindhia. This was known to the British. Palmer hinted at in his letter to Lord Wellesley dated the 2nd October, 1801: "He is now engaged in a treaty with Yeswunt Rao to support him against Sindhia in his pretensions to the succession of the late Tukoji Holkar in prejudice to the right of Kashi Rao, in consideration of his relinquishing the possessions of his family in the Deccan amounting to 25 lakhs of rupees annual revenue."¹⁹ In order to please Jaswant, Bajji Rao II proposed to Sindhia that Khande Rao Holkar should be set at liberty and that Sindhia should "also restore to Jaswant Rao, the greatest part of his possessions in Malwa, reserving only such a portion thereof as might indemnify him for all losses resulting from the present war."²⁰ But Bajji Rao II changed his attitude when Jaswant lost the Battle of Indore. On October 29, 1801, he confiscated once again the whole Saranjam of the Holkar family on the ground that Kashi Rao had helped Jaswant Rao against Sindhia.²¹

Meanwhile, Daulat Rao Sindhia was slowly making preparations to strike hard against Jaswant Rao Holkar. Reaching the environs of Ujjain on the 19th November, 1801, he encamped at Datta's Akhara.

18. Gupta, Bajji Rao II and the Company, p.30.

19. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. VI, p.667.

20. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. IX, Letter of Collins to the Governor General, 10th October, 1802.

21. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p. vii; S.P.D. XXXXI, 33.

His army having fallen a victim to famine and pestilence, there, he returned to his camp outside Ujjain on the 28th of December, marching through Samhaten, Sanver, Dhar, Badhnawar and Kachraud.²² It was then that he opened negotiations with Jaswant Rao Holkar.²³ According to both Skinner and Grant Duff, Sindhia offered to recognise Jaswant as guardian to the head of the Holkar family and to show his earnestness in the matter Kashi Rao was sent to Jaswant's camp.²⁴ There was, however, no sincerity behind this move. Daulat Rao had done it to save his territories from the depredations of the Holkar.

Though on a letter addressed to Bharmal Holkar, dated the 17th May, 1802, Jaswant Rao Holkar stressed the importance of co-operation for the sake of national solidarity and strength,²⁵ the demands that he made against Sindhia make it abundantly clear that he lacked genuine patriotism and spirit of self-sacrifice. He demanded that Khande Rao, who had been kept confined in the Asirgarh fort since June, 1801, should be released; all his jagirs should be restored to him; he should be recognised as the head of the Holkar family and be given a part of Sindhia's territory in the north.²⁶ Besides, every village and fort in any part of India that had once belonged to the Holkars should be granted absolute parity in respect of territory, income and the allowance of power and resources by their sovereign the Peshwa.²⁷ Finally, all the promises and agreements that had been made in the past between Mahadji Sindhia and Tukeji Holkar were to be confirmed.²⁸ It was impossible for Daulat Rao Sindhia to accept these demands.

22. Sarkar, Fall of the Mughal Empire, Vol. IV, p.190.

23. Waqai-Holkar, f. 100a.

24. Fraser, Military Memoir of Skinner, Vol. I, p.197; Duff, Vol. II, p.201.

25. Holkarshahichya Itihasanchi Sadhane, Vol. II, p.37.

26. Bengal Secret Political Consultations 1803, (21 February)(1).

27. Sarkar, Fall of the Mughal Empire, Vol. IV, p.189.

28. Waqai-Holkar, f. 100a.

3. A short reconciliation between the brothers.

By this time Kashi Rao was thoroughly disappointed from Sindhia's side and began to develop half-hearted esteem for Jaswant, his brother, whose fighting qualities came almost as a revelation to him. Jaswant was also eager to make up his affairs with his brother in order to serve his own interest. Every well-wisher of the Holkar family earnestly desired this reconciliation. Malhar and Baloji Krishna wrote to Bharmal Holkar: "Please try to bring about reconciliation between the two brothers Kashi Rao and Yashwant Rao. We desire and pray for the peace and continuity of the times of Devi Ahalya Bai."²⁹

As early as May 1801, Jaswant had tried to persuade his brother to unite his forces with him in opposing the ambitions of Daulat Rao; but Kashi Rao distrusted the intentions and assurances of his brother and also did not want to provoke Sindhia.³⁰ After Jaswant's brilliant victory at Ujjain, Kashi Rao sent him his congratulations for the first time.³¹ Sindhia had written to him, "I am informed from Poona that the Khasgi and Daulat of the Holkar State are separate and distinct departments. The mother of Khande Rao Holkar holds authority over the Khasgi. Please return the rights to proper authorities."³² Kashi Rao's relations with Sindhia having become strained he opened negotiations with his brother. "A quarrel between brothers", wrote Kashi Rao to Jaswant, "is a cause of public regret and of the strengthening of the enemies."

29. Holkarshahichya Itihasanchi Sadhane, Vol. II, p.32.

30. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. IX, Collins to the Governor General, 31st May, 1801.

31. Sarkar, Fall of the Mughal Empire, Vol. IV, p.191.

32. Holkarshahichya Itihasachi Sadhane, Vol. II, p.22.

What is past is past. The tragic end of Malhar Rao was due to his fate. It is now desirable that we should act in concert and do what is agreed upon."³³ Jaswant Rao showed willingness to serve Kashi Rao and promised 'princely provision' to be made for his brother when he would come to Maheshwar.³⁴ He hoped to see his eldest brother 'on a very auspicious day.'³⁵ Kashi Rao Holkar moved from Sendhwa to Maheshwar on the 14th August, 1801.³⁶ He was accompanied by Khizir Khan, Wahid Ali Khan, Achhe Singh, two battalions and 400 troopers. It was settled between the brothers that Kashi Rao should occupy the throne while Jaswant, acting as his servant, would conduct the war against Daulat Rao Sindhia.³⁷ This arrangement was not likely to last long. Soon after Kashi Rao joined him. Jaswant wrote to Bharmal Holkar, "Please provide my brother with faithful guards."³⁸ But these 'faithful guards' kept Kashi Rao Holkar like a prisoner in Sendhwa-ghat; Jaswant Rao at the same time was carrying on correspondence with Sindhia to establish Khande Rao as the lawful head of the House of Holkar. Having realised that Jaswant's policy was to reduce him to the position of a dependent pensioner, Kashi Rao fled away to the fort of Sendhwa.³⁹ Jaswant Rao Holkar blamed Kashi Rao's 'mean, selfish and senseless' people for this development.⁴⁰ All the property of Kashi Rao fell into Jaswant's hands. He encamped at Thalner on the bank of the Tapti and drove out from there the men who were holding that outpost for Kashi Rao Holkar.⁴¹

33. Waqai-Holkar, f. 95a.

34. Holkarshahichya Itihasachi Sadhane, Vol. II, p.30.

35. Ibid., p.35.

36. Sarkar, Fall of the Mughal Empire, Vol. IV, p.191.

37. Waqai-Holkar, f. 95a.

38. Holkarshahichya Itihasachi Sadhane, Vol. II, p.33.

39. Sarkar, Fall of the Mughal Empire, Vol. IV, p.191.

40. Holkarshahichya Itihasachi Sadhane, Vol. II, p.33.

41. Ibid.

4. The roving campaign of Jaswant Rao Holkar in Malwa and Khandesh.

While peace-parleys were proceeding with Sindhia on the one hand and Kashi Rao on the other, Jaswant had not been sitting idle at one place. It is necessary at this stage to recount his activities since the days he lost the battle at Indore to the day he recaptured that city once again. According to Basawan Lal, one night at Jamgaon where Holkar had encamped after his defeat at Indore, Mir Khan found Jaswant Rao 'in loud and bitter lamentation.'⁴² The reason for it was Jaswant's worry that his troops would desert him as he had no money to pay them. Mir Khan consoled him by saying, "Trouble not yourself about this matter. I will find a remedy. Pray only that the great God may open upon us the gates of his bountiful mercy." Then Mir Khan gave such a studied oration to the soldiers that all of them promised to Jaswant, "If our heads were this instant to be severed from our bodies, we would not consent to leave your service."⁴³ The only conclusion that can be drawn out of this is that Jaswant Rao and his friends had not been inactive and were girding themselves up for another trial of strength. It is reported by Collins that when the agents of General Perron visited Jaswant with a message, the latter pointed 'to his horse and spear and directed the men to tell their master that the former at all times afforded him a shade to sleep in and the latter means of subsistence.'⁴⁴ Jaswant had told his soldiers plainly that he had no money to pay them; in future they would have to live on plunder.⁴⁵ This offer of

42. Basawan Lal, Tr., p.144.

43. Ibid., p.145.

44. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. IX, 50.

45. Fraser, Military Memoir of Skinner, Vol. I, p.197.

living on plunder was a tempting one and infused enthusiasm not only among his own followers but drew to his side many of Sindhia's soldiers.⁴⁶

Jaswant's tactics were to disperse for plunder, change the ground rapidly and if needed combine for battle. "His forces formed into three separate divisions spread out like fans and combed the entire country for food and spoils."⁴⁷ Jaswant Rao rightly thought that by practising light foray tactics, avoiding fair fighting and laying waste the country round the enemy, he would be feeding his own men and at the same time cripple the enemy effectually.⁴⁸ In Khandesh alone Jaswant collected 20 lakhs of rupees during the three weeks of May and this enabled him to pay his cavalry and greatly increase the strength and efficiency of his European trained infantry under Hardinge, Armstrong and Vickers.⁴⁹ Rapid success came to the Holkar chief. Compton compares his swelling army with a mountain torrent which gains volume⁵⁰ as it runs. He realised tribute from Sindhia's parganas of Barkenda and Sakur.⁵¹ When he reached Navlai on the 10th November, 1801,⁵² Shyam Rao Mahadik, who had been sent there by Sindhia to win over the soldiers of Dudrenes's campoo, joined Jaswant Rao Holkar with seven battalions of soldiers and 35 guns.⁵³ Marching from there, Jaswant

46. Duff, Vol. II, p.201.

47. Sarkar, Fall of the Mughal Empire, Vol. IV, p.200.

48. Fraser, Military Memoir of Skinner, Vol. II, p.3.

49. Waqai-Holkar, f. 106a.

50. Compton, European Military Adventurers of Hindustan, p.277.

51. Waqai-Holkar, f. 99a.

52. Sarkar, Fall of the Mughal Empire, Vol. IV, p.191.

53. Waqai-Holkar, f. 99a.

looted village Pashte in Khandesh belonging to Jankoji Rao Dhamdhere.⁵⁴ Having seized many cattle, cash and property from this place, Jaswant Rao Holkar reduced Ratlam and several adjoining districts to ashes⁵⁵ and got a large booty in money money and food articles like cloves, cardamoms and sugar.⁵⁶ With a swelling army and increased resources he had little difficulty in taking back Indore. Having left two brigades of infantry with a body of cavalry at Indore, Jaswant halted for some time at Samrurghat and then proceeded towards Maheshwar along with Mir Khan to raise funds there. He reached Maheshwar on the 20th November⁵⁷ and after taking out of Maheshwar clothing and other articles for the expenses of his troops, and leaving Mohan Lal and Jagan Lal with his campoo there, Jaswant himself marched away to Jaora.⁵⁸

While Jaswant Rao was thus engaged, Karim Khan and Chetoo Khan, the Pindari chiefs in service of Daulat Rao Sindhia, reduced to great straits the brigades of Jaswant at Indore and compelled them to retire to Samrurghat. Mir Khan rushed for their help with '100 of his own horse and about two thousand men of his reserve'⁵⁹ and inflicted severe losses on Sindhia's Pindaris.

"A great number of men were at once put hors de combat, and the Pindaris losing heart, gave up their design of attacking Amir's

54. Historical Selections from Baroda State Records, Vol. IV, p.482.

"यादी पत्रे कीं, तीर्थरूप मातुश्री येमुनाबाई ठमठेर येथें आहेत. त्यांचे चिरंजीव जानोजी ठमठेर आनंदशांत प्रगळे बैराबद येथें महालाचे बंदोबस्तास गेले होते. तेथें राजश्री आनंदराव होलकर यांनीं माथलांत मनझची दंगा करोन, ठाणें पाहें येथें चिरंजीव होते त्यास उराधावर हात्ता करोन, गांधसुधां गर्डी लुटून, घडी - उंटे - बैल व गाई - म्हस्ती व नक्याचें दिवला व पांघरुणें बगैर दरोबस्त नेले, आणि चिरंजीवास आपले फौजेत नेउन नगदी ऐवज घेतला आहे."

55. Waqai-Holkar, f. 99b.

56. Basawan Lal, Tr., p.146.

57. Sarkar, Fall of the Mughal Empire, Vol. IV, p.191.

58. Waqai-Holkar, ff. 100a-100b.

59. Basawan Lal, Tr., p.147.

party and retired. Their retreat was soon converted into flight."⁶⁰ Mir Khan carried the troops back to Indore where they were joined by Jaswant himself on the 2nd December, 1801. The defeated Pindaris of Karim Khan and Chetoo Khan fell back on Ujjain. Jaswant with Mir Khan, Imam Buksh and Kader Buksh Pindaris and other sawars turned suddenly upon Ujjain and passed the night at a place only 8 miles from the city. The business which the Pindaris of Holkar had in hand was to draw out the Pindaris of Sindhia from the city to the place where Jaswant Rao's forces were stationed. In pursuance of this plan they carried off three hundred camels of Sindhia's army. Being outnumbered and outmatched the latter wisely kept on the defensive to save the situation.⁶¹

Not only Indore but all Malwa lay open to the ravages of Jaswant Rao Holkar. Daulat Rao Sindhia detached four battalions of Brownrigg and eight battalions of Kalb Ali Khan and deputed Bala Rao Ingolia to renew the attack against Jaswant Rao Holkar.⁶² The latter on getting the news shifted from Indore to Piplodah, the jagir of Shyamrao Mahadik, who had died recently after a short illness.⁶³ Then collecting tribute from every place on the way, he came to Pratapgarh Deolia on the 6th January, 1802.⁶⁴ From there he sent Bhawani Shankar to Jawad and himself moved on to Hinglajgarh. It was at this time that he wrote to Lakhwa Dada to join him in person. Lakhwa politely declined the ^{invitation} ~~innovation~~ saying that he was 'prevented from going by his regard for both the chiefs - Sindhia and Holkar.'⁶⁵

60. Basawan Lal, Tr., p.148.

61. Ibid., p.149.

62. Waqai-Holkar, f. 101a; Basawan Lal, Tr., p.150.

63. Waqai-Holkar, f. 100b.

64. Sarkar, Fall of the Mughal Empire, Vol. IV, p.191.

65. Waqai-Holkar, ff. 101a-101b.



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Jaswant Rao Holkar was conducting the campaign in the true Maratha style, moving rapidly in order to avoid Sindhia's army in the field. Marching through Dhar, Amⁱⁿera, Dhululia, Pratapgarh, Jawadh and Neemahera, he reached Nathdwara at the end of January.⁶⁶ For a long time he had heard tales about the wealth of the place. He, therefore, demanded three lakhs from the Goswamis, failing which he would take possession of all the wealth and valuable articles found in the temples. The Goswamis appealed for help to Maharana Bhim Singh who deputed Kalyan Singh Jhala of Delwade, Vijay Singh Chauhan of Kotharia, Thakur Bijay Singh of Kunthava, Rathor Jagat Singh of Agarya, Ajit Singh Bhati of Moy, Eklunga Das Bolya and Jamadar Nathu Sindhi for the purpose.⁶⁷ Taking three images and the Goswamis of Nathdwara with them they encamped at the village of Unvas. Thinking that the Holkar menace had subsided, Bijay Singh Chauhan resumed his march to Kotharia. Here he was attacked by Jaswant Rao's men. Bijay Singh found himself clearly outnumbered but refused to lay down his arms.⁶⁸ He made a gallant and reckless charge and was killed along with a large number of Rajputs; a party of his followers meanwhile succeeded in returning to Udaipur.⁶⁹ With the three Nathdwara idols, Jaswant exacted a heavy contribution⁷⁰ from the wealthy inhabitants of Nathdwara

66. Basawan Lal, Tr., p.149; Sarkar, Fall of the Mughal Empire, Vol. IV, p.191.

67. Ojha, Rajputane ka Itihasa, Vol. III, p.1001.

68. Ibid., p.1002.

69. Ojha, Rajputane ka Itihasa, Vol. III, p.1002.

70. According to Ojha, Jaswant enforced his demand of several lakhs as war indemnity (Vol.III, p.1002). Basawan Lal writes, "From the inferior Brahmanas fifty thousand rupees were obtained, and the army then went to lesser Nathdwara, where only six thousand were realised." (Tr., p.149). Mohan Singh reports that Jaswant exacted Rs.35,000 from Kakroli and Rs.40,000 from the second Nathdwara. (Waqai-Holkar, f. 102a.)

and marching via Lawa and Ajmer, reached Jaipur.⁷¹ This impious act tainted the fame of Jaswant Rao in Rajputana for all times. Bala Rao Ingolia was coming in hot pursuit of Jaswant and made a surprise night attack on the Holkar's camp.⁷² It failed as Holkar's troops were "accustomed to be on the alert and they learnt of this move of the enemy."⁷³

After this incident Jaswant marched out of Jaipur, reached Lawa and Rabkhera and then turned towards Rampura and Tonk. Captain Syme's battalion which had been left for the defence of Tonk fled to Rampura on hearing the approach of Jaswant. Mohan Singh writes, "As soon as Jaswant's army arrived, men of Perron fled away from their thanas with their bare lives. Jaswant's horsemen went in hot pursuit and slew many of them while the enemy with their shot and bullets killed many of our men."⁷⁴ Jaswant reached Tonk and plundered the place. Then he moved on to Uniara, the Raja of which place presented to him a peshkash of Rs.1000 and an elephant. Next he encamped at Indargarh, the governor of which also presented an elephant, some money and received favours from Jaswant.⁷⁵ Having exacted contributions from Lakheri and Chambal, Jaswant Rao sent Bhawani Shankar with 1000 horse towards Sheopur, where the Bakshi obtained Rs.35,000.⁷⁶ He himself went to Kota and demanded three lakhs of rupees from Zalim Singh. The Kota Rajah agreed to pay

71. Ojha, Rajputane ka Itihasa, Vol. III, p.1002.

72. Tod, Annals of Rajasthan, Vol. I, pp.529-530.

73. Waqai-Holkar, f.102a.

74. Ibid., f. 102b; Bagawan Lal, Tr., p.150.

75. Waqai-Holkar, f. 103a.

76. Waqai-Holkar, f. 103b.

only one lakh provided 'Holkar's troops refrain from plundering the country.'⁷⁷ Leaving Nago Pandit, Balchand Seth and Najib Khan behind to realise tribute from Zalim Singh and also to extort money from Lalji Pandit - the Sazawal of Sindhia at Kota - Jaswant arrived at Sheopur.⁷⁸ Marching and plundering again by way of Nuri, Shahabad, Gokul Chhera, Shujawalpur, Ashta, Hada, he reached Maheshwar at the end of March, 1802. Crossing the Narmada once again, he halted for fifteen days at Khargaon Batisi.⁷⁹ Bhawani Shankar and Harnath Singh who had been left at Khandwa, were having daily clashes with the Pindaris of Sindhia.⁸⁰ The new policy of Jaswant Rao was that "there should be no premiscuous pillage hence-forward, but that the system of levying contributions should be put in force."⁸¹ He sent Mir Khan to Khandesh; himself left Sendhwa on the 4th May, 1802,⁸² crossed the Tapti and halted at Chalisgaon on the 20th of that month.⁸³ On the 31st May, Jaswant Rao Holkar marched towards the Godavari⁸⁴ and spent the next two months at Malegaon, Parole, Ner (18 miles west of Dhulia) and other places in this region.⁸⁵ He fixed his headquarters at Chandor⁸⁶ and levied heavy contributions from places belonging to the Peshwa and Sindhia.⁸⁷ From Parole alone he exacted two lakhs of rupees.⁸⁸

77. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. IX, Collins to the Governor General, 25th February, 1802. According to Malcolm Zalim Singh paid seven lakhs (Memoirs of Central India, Vol. I, p.223).

78. Waqai-Holkar, f. 103b.

79. Ibid., f. 104a; Basawan Lal, Tr., p.151.

80. Waqai-Holkar, f. 104a.

81. Basawan Lal, Tr., p.151.

82. Sarkar, Fall of the Mughal Empire, Vol. IV, p.191.

83. Bengal Secret Political Consultations, 1803, 21st February (58)

84. Papers re Mahratta War, 1803, p.62.

85. S.P.D. XXXI, 34; Sarkar, Fall of the Mughal Empire, Vol.IV, p.191.

86. Basawan Lal, Tr., p.152.

87. Waqai-Holkar, f. 106a; Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol.X.p.12.

88. Waqai-Holkar, f. 105b.

Marching by way of Dharamgaon, Erandol, Rampura Murana and collecting nearly 20 lakhs of rupees from those places Jaswant marched back to Chandor.⁸⁹ From Chandor he directed his steps to the Deccan.

5. Jaswant Rao Holkar invades the Deccan.

Holkar's invasion of the Deccan is a long catalogue of misfortunes suffered by the Desh districts of Maharashtra. "The theatre of his campaign can be roughly described as an inverted triangle with a 72 mile long base from Ahmadnagar south-westwards to Poona, and its apex at Pandharpur, 106 miles due south of Ahmadnagar, while the third side, 116 miles in length, joined Pandharpur to Poona in a north-western slant."⁹⁰

For the convenience of paying the soldiers and levying contributions, Jaswant Rao decided that his commanders should act separately. The instructions he gave to his officers were blunt and utterly devoid of mercy, "If payment were refused and the troops opposed, the place should be carried and the garrison put to the sword, and the chiefs at the head of resistance, utterly ruined and destroyed."⁹¹ During the Deccan campaign the most important part was played by three of his officers - Fateh Singh Mane, Shahmat Khan and Mir Khan.

In the middle of June, 1802, Jaswant was reported to be at

89. Waqai-Holkar., f.106a.

90. Sarkar, Fall of the Mughal Empire, Vol. IV, p.199

91. Basawan Lal, Tr., p.151.

Erandol, 80 miles north of the Godavari with 25,000 cavalry and 600 infantry.⁹² In Baglana - 64 miles from the Godavari, there were 6000 cavalry of 'half Pathans' and 2000 infantry with six guns under Shahamat Khan. On the southern bank of the Godavari under the command of Fateh Singh Mane there were 6000 cavalry, chiefly Marathas but including a few Pathans and 3000 infantry with 16 guns. Mir Khan, at Malegaon, had under him 4000 Pathan cavalry. Jaswant's total strength was thus estimated at 41,000 cavalry; 13,500 infantry and 36 guns.⁹³

While going towards the Deccan, says Close, Jaswant gave out that he was going on pilgrimage to the temple of Jejuri and 'that no injunctions on his part could induce his adherents to separate from him.'⁹⁴ His real purpose was to find means of subsistence in the virgin soil of Maharashtra as Malwa and Khandesh⁹⁵ had already been sucked dry. Baji Rao II appealed to Daulat Rao for help⁹⁶ and meanwhile increased his forces to 4000 cavalry and 1000 infantry.⁹⁷ "But the army so collected was nothing but a crowd which knew very little of war, officered by men who knew hardly more."⁹⁸

Fateh Singh Mane, who stood on the southern bank of ^{the Godavari} Godavari, had arrived at Dongargaon (11 miles north of Ahmadnagar) on the 25th June, 1802. The vanguard of his cavalry force under Jagannath

92. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p.13, Letter of Close to the Governor General, June 14, 1802.

93. Ibid.

94. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p.12.

95. Sarkar, Fall of the Mughal Empire, Vol. IV, p.201.

96. S.P.D. XXXI, 9 - "प्राशस्त्या मित्राची भेट कधी होईल."

97. Bengal Secret Political Consultations, 1803, 21st February(20)

98. Gupta, Baji Rao II and the Company, p.32.

Ram Shenvi devastated the environs of the city of Ahmadnagar.⁹⁹ A letter from Ujjain written on the 21st July confirms this: "Holkar's horsemen are in the Ahmadnagar district. In Desh all the cities have been devastated and the peasants are being subjected to extreme oppression."¹⁰⁰ Soon afterwards Mane marched to Farha Bagh, six miles south east of Ahmadnagar. Having killed its few hundred Arab defenders, his men looted half of the town lying outside the fort walls on the 7th July. The fort of Ahmadnagar, however, held out under its Sindhian commandant. A week earlier, another detachment under Abaji Lakshman had occupied Jamgaon (16 miles south-west of Ahmadnagar), had realised ransom and the soldiers had begun to dig up the floors of houses for concealed treasure. Those who escaped this rapaciousness became victims of contagious diseases and horrors of famine.¹⁰¹ Another detachments of 3000 horse belonging to Mane's division had moved southwards from Farha Bagh and arrived at the north bank of the Bhima river opposite Gar Dond, 44 miles east of Poona on the 10th of July.¹⁰² On the 18th July, Mane repulsed a corps of Sindhia sent from Ahmadnagar.¹⁰³

Meanwhile, a small corps of the Peshwa's cavalry containing 2500 men under Pandoji Kunjar had advanced slowly and in dribblets to Gar Dond to watch the fort and block the eastern approach to Poona.¹⁰⁴ Even the sight of the state banner in charge of Nana

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99. Sarkar, Fall of the Mughal Empire, Vol. IV, p.196.
 100. Gulgule Daftar, Letter, 21st July, 1802.
 101. Gulgule Daftar, Letter of 25th June, 1802.
 102. Bengal Secret Political Consultations, 1803, 21st February(28)
 103. Bengal Secret Political Consultations, 1803, 21st February(5)
 104. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p.17, Close to the Governor General, July 29, 1802.

Purandhare could^{not} make Fateh Singh Mane retreat.¹⁰⁵ 'In the night between the 20th and the 21st August', Mane's troops opened a cannonade on the sleeping camp of Pandoji Kunjar at Gar.¹⁰⁶ Next morning his Pindaris crossed the Bhima, seized ponies, the golden banner, and articles worth lakhs of rupees and 34 guns.¹⁰⁷ Pandoji fled in panic from Gar to Patas, 6 miles to the south-west, and then to Poona after a few days.¹⁰⁸ This half-hearted effort having failed, a serious one was made to stem the rising tide of Holkar.

A large detachment of Daulat Rao's army under Sadasiv Bhaskar along with the campoo of Kalb Ali Khan, five battalions of Dawes, 10,000 Pindaris, 20,000 cavalry and countless guns,¹⁰⁹ reached the enemies of the fort of Ahmadnagar on the 16th September to expel Mane's raiding bands.¹¹⁰ Before the arrival of Bhaskar, Mane had set fire to the houses of the village of Dond and had devastated Raisin, Bhose, Karkomb and Kartabad Mandavgaon.¹¹¹ For about a fortnight (10th September to 28th September), Mane kept roving and plundering far and wide, but he allowed no sacrilege within the holy precincts of Pandharpur.¹¹²

The activities of Jaswant Rao Holkar and Mir Khan had been less vigorous than that of Fateh Singh Mane. Jaswant arrived at

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105. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p.17. Close to the Governor General, July 29, 1802. According to Mohan Singh, Pandoji took the offensive as 'Fateh Singh out of respect for the banner said that he had no intention of fighting.' (Waqai-Holkar, f. 107a).
106. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p.19.
107. Waqai-Holkar, f. 107a.
108. Sarkar, Fall of the Mughal Empire, Vol. IV, p.197.
109. Waqai-Holkar, f. 106a.
110. Bengal Secret Political Consultations, 1803, 21 February (28)
111. Khare, XIV, 6427, 6433.
112. Sarkar, Fall of the Mughal Empire, Vol. IV, p.198.

Sangamner on the 2nd August, captured several forts in the Chandor range and then took a long time in exacting contributions from the Northern part of the Nasik district.¹¹³ He demanded a collective ransom of forty lakhs, confined the well-to-do in their houses and divided the city into compartments by erecting barriers. The people were mercilessly beaten.¹¹⁴ When they offered Jaswant four lakhs, he thundered out - "Pay down forty lakhs; or else I shall first sack your holy city and then set fire to it."¹¹⁵ It was only at the end of September, 1802, that Jaswant left for the Junnar subdivision of the Poona district.¹¹⁶

Mir Khan had been busy most of the time in Khandesh. Having exacted contribution at Malegaon, Mir Khan crossed the ghat and encamped at Inchor, whom he defeated and obtained a rich booty.¹¹⁷ He also levied contributions at Aurangabad, Usur, Deogaon, and Baree Subangarh.¹¹⁸ Mir Khan arrived at Toka-tirtha on the 5th September, 1802. Here his whole army crossed the river on boats saying that they were going to worship Mahadeo. On arrival they oppressed the Brahmanas.¹¹⁹ Mir Khan could not act vigorously because his soldiers refused to march unless their arrears were paid.¹²⁰

In the district of Nasik, Shahamat Khan with his Pathan horse was engaged in profitable predatory activities.¹²¹ In July, 1802, he defeated a party under Nara Singh Khande Rao, a jagirdar of the

113. Basawan Lal, Tr., p.152.

114. Khare, XIV, 6427, 6433.

115. Ibid.

116. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p.21.

117. Basawan Lal, Tr., p.153.

118. Ibid., pp. 153-154.

119. Khare, XIV, 6423.

120. Waqai-Holkar, f. 105b.

121. Bengal Secret Political Consultations, 1803, 21 February (4)

Peshwa, and killed him.¹²² As Jaswant had ordered Shahamat Khan to be nearer to Mane in view of the approach of Sadashiv Bhaskar towards Junnar, he turned southwards from Nasik and came to Sinnar (70 miles north-west of Ahmadnagar).¹²³ He plundered the Junnar region for a week and had several skirmishes with the slow-moving detachments of Sindhia.

The first open clash between Sadashiv Bhaskar and Holkar's force took place on the 5th October, 1802, in the neighbourhood of Narayangaon and Uttur.¹²⁴ It continued for two days.¹²⁵ On the first day, Sadashiv's horsemen marched several miles ahead of their infantry support. Holkar's force under Nagoo Pandit, Mir Khan, Shahamat Khan, Jamshed Khan and Muhammad Sayyad Khan drove away the cavalry of Sadashiv towards their infantry encampment. Mir Khan fought gallantly. "He ordered his standard elephant," says Basawan Lal, "to be turned direct against the enemy, entered into the battle, and exerted himself in the play of the sword".¹²⁶ Mir Khan hovered about the enemy, but could not keep up the battle at night as his men were too tired after a whole day's fighting.¹²⁷ The arrival of Jaswant Rao that very evening infused great enthusiasm among the soldiers.¹²⁸ Next day, an ambitious and vigorous attack was launched against the Sindhian column. As Holkar's horsemen galloped up to the front line, they were mowed down by grape-shot fired from Sindhia's guns.¹²⁹ Shahamat Khan received a wound and

122. Bengal Secret Political Consultations, 1803, 21 February (4)

123. Sarkar, Fall of the Mughal Empire, Vol. IV, p. 195.

124. Ibid., p. 201.

125. Waqai-Holkar, f. 107b.

126. Basawan Lal, Tr., p. 157.

127. Ibid.

128. Waqai-Holkar, f. 107b.

129. Basawan Lal, Tr., p. 159.

a horse was shot dead under Jaswant Rao. After a close and sharp contest, Jaswant Rao Holkar's force fell back on Ojhar (5 miles south-east of Junnar), abandoning three of its guns and one flag.¹³⁰

This period of Holkar's desultory warfare was a gruesome tale of murders, pillage and desolation throughout Malwa, Khandesh and the Desh districts of Maharashtra. His soldiers 'respected neither the laws of God nor of men'.¹³¹ Major H. Bevan, who travelled through Khandesh, wrote, "The whole of our march through Candeish was rendered melancholy by the strong contrast between the natural advantages of the country and its complete desolation. Its once extensive towns and villages strew the plains with ruins."¹³² No trifle missed the eyes of Holkar's men and no merchandise their hands. Even furniture and women's ornaments were snatched away.¹³³ It was a heart-rending scene of villages burnt, women ravished, Brahmanas insulted and temples desecrated. It is indeed impossible to exaggerate the miseries which the people were compelled to endure in these iron times. As the peasants lost the fruits of their labour, they abandoned their fields and nothing green could be seen standing on the face of the earth.¹³⁴ Sir J.N. Sarkar succinctly sums up the situation: "As the many hordes of Holkar's horsemen spread over like fans, their lines of advance could be known from afar by the flocks of vultures hovering over the dust clouds that hid these swarms of human locusts."¹³⁵

130. Sarkar, Fall of the Mughal Empire, Vol. IV, p.201.

131. Fitzclarence, Journal of a Route across India through Egypt to England in the latter end of the year 1817, p.2.

132. Bevan, Thirty years in India, Vol. II, p.177.

133. Fraser, Military Memoir of Skinner, Vol. II, p.4.

134. Sarkar, Fall of the Mughal Empire, Vol. IV, p.214.

135. Ibid., p.215.

CHAPTER VI

Civil War in Maharashtra.

1. Execution of Vithoji Holkar.

The Civil War in Maharashtra in 1802, which appears to the distant posterity as a tissue of calamitous follies, was not regarded with different eyes by the subjects of Peshwa Bajji Rao II. While Jaswant Rao Holkar was menacingly advancing towards the Deccan all was not well at Poona. The supine rule of Peshwa Bajji Rao II gave the final push to the tottering Maratha confederacy. He had neither the ability nor even the desire to make Daulat Rao Sindhia and Jaswant Rao Holkar live in peace. Elphinstone rightly points out that the Peshwa was eager for power but lacked the boldness necessary to acquire it.¹ In the true oriental way he allowed things to drift and followed the perverse policy of thriving on the differences that existed between Holkar and Sindhia. He hated Jaswant Rao as he held him responsible for all the evils in the Maratha State and expressed this opinion in an interview with Sydenham: "Holkar is a bad man from his heart; he loves disorder, he hates repose He is a monster who must be destroyed."² He looked upon Daulat Rao as a 'weak foolish boy' who himself was faultless but was ill-advised by others.³ There was little hope that Jaswant Rao Holkar could ever be reconciled to Bajji Rao II who had ordered the execution of Vithoji Holkar on the 16th April, 1801. Malcolm remarks, "This act of Bajerow and the confinement

1. Colebrooke, Life of Elphinstone, Vol. II, p.289.

2. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. VII, p.233.

3. Ibid.

of Kundee Row were always pleaded by Jaswant as his excuse for the life of violence and crime he subsequently led."⁴

Vithoji Holkar, the younger brother of Jaswant Rao, was the spoilt darling of the Holkar family. He began his career as wayward youngman and provoked the wrath of the Peshwa by his devastations round Pandharpur.⁵ Vithoji exploited the widespread discontent against Bajji Rao II and enlisted the support of several insurgents such as Jivaji Yashwant, Yashwant Rao Ramkrishna and Krishna Rao Modi. The Peshwa could not brook his insolence as Vithoji was a follower of Amrit Rao.⁶ Vithoji openly gave out that he was supporting Amrit Rao with the sole object of saving the Maratha State from the approaching ruin.⁷ He had collected sufficient followers and even succeeded in winning over to his side Balkrishna Gangadhar Babanpange who had been sent by the Peshwa to chastise him.⁸ Balkrishna Gangadhar was later defeated by Ganpat Rao Panse and was brought to Poona⁹ where he was put under arrest.¹⁰ Jivaji Yashwant himself escaped this fate but his brother had to suffer in his place. Jivaji had foolishly thought that the Peshwa would excuse his past offences and would take him back in his favour. His brother went to Poona, under a guarantee of personal safety, to represent the case of his brother. He was treacherously arrested; his troops were attacked and dispersed.¹¹

4. Malcolm, *Memoirs of Central India*, Vol. I, p.227.

5. S.P.D. XXXXI, 30.

6. *Peshwaichi Akher*, p.101; *Marathi Riyasat*, pp.178-179.

7. Sardesai, *New History of the Marathas*, Vol. III, p.366.

8. *Marathi Riyasat*, p.178.

9. *Bengal Secret Political Consultations*, 1801, 16th April (63).

10. *Bengal Secret Political Consultations*, 1801, 16th April (32).

11. *Ibid.*

Baloji Kunjar and Bapu Gokhale were specially commissioned to get hold of Vithoji Holkar. After several scuffles at different places¹² Vithoji was captured alive by Bapu Gokhale.¹³ Baloji Kunjar suggested a barbarous mode of execution for Vithoji to make him an example for others. Vithoji 'offered up the humblest supplication for life and mercy'¹⁴ and several well-wishers of the Maratha State pleaded for softer measures. But the Peshwa could not tolerate even the slightest whisper in favour of Vithoji. The latter was flogged, received 200 stripes on his body, was tied to the foot of an elephant, dragged about in the palace compound and was killed with horrid cruelty.¹⁵ Bajji Rao II and Baloji Kunjar gleefully watched the sight from the terrace of the palace. Palmer commented on it: "It is to be admitted that this person deserved punishment and even that of death would not have been censured if it had been inflicted with any respect to the distinguished family of which he was a member."¹⁶

When the news reached Jaswant Rao Holkar he was drowned in grief and his anger knew no bounds.¹⁷ Outwardly he said that Vithoji

12. Sardesai, New History of the Marathas, Vol. III, p.366.

13. Rajwade, X, 525.

14. Duff, Vol. II, p.199.

15. Bengal Secret Political Consultations, 1801, 3rd June (49); Peshwasachi Bakhar, p.174; Peshwaschi Akher, p.101; Khare, XIII, 6027; Holkarshahichya Itihasachi Sadhane, Vol. II, 32, 34.

16. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. VII, p.636, Letter of Palmer to Lord Wellesley, 20th April, 1801.

17. Khare, XIII, 6858 - "या बधाची बातमी मानण्यांत पोचतांच यशवंतराव

होल्कराचें पित मडकून तो भयंकर बेफाम झाला."

"Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p. VII, ".... Jaswant became wild with rage and vowed vengeance on all those whom he considered guilty of this atrocity."

deserved punishment as he had desecrated sacred place like Pandharpur and assured the Peshwa that he would serve him faithfully and to the best of his ability.¹⁸ Covertly he made preparations to take a severe revenge. According to Dr. P.C. Gupta, Vithoji's death afforded an insufficient motive for the cost and danger of Jaswant's expedition to the south and 'this incident unfortunate though it was, does not deserve the importance attributed to it.'¹⁹ In this connection, Jaswant Rao's final warning to the Peshwa should not be overlooked: "If you wish to avoid bloodshed, send to me at once Baloji Kunjar and Dajiba Deshmukh on your behalf, and Baburao Angre and Nimbayi Bhaskar on behalf of Sindhia to negotiate terms."²⁰ These were the persons who were responsible for the barbarous murder of Vithoji Holkar. How could Jaswant forgive them and forget the fact that the body of his brother was exhibited for full twenty-four hours before the funeral rites were allowed to be performed? Jaswant Rao had ever since nursed 'a silent but sleepless thirst of vengeance' against the Peshwa and his advisers in the tragedy. These men knew the feelings of Jaswant.²¹

2. Confiscation of the saranjams of the Holkar family.

The carpet-knights of the Poona Durbar had foolishly taught the Peshwa to underrate the strength of Jaswant Rao Holkar. On October 29, 1801, Baji Rao II, on their suggestion confiscated the whole of the saranjam of the Holkar family²² 'mainly because Kashi Rao had helped Jaswant Rao against Sindhia.'²³ While Jaswant Rao

18. S.P.D. XXXI, 30.

19. Gupta, Baji Rao II and the Company, p.29.

20. Sardesai, New History of the Marathas, Vol. III, p.366.

21. Sarkar, Fall of the Mughal Empire, Vol. IV, p.195.

22. Khare, XIII, 6927.

23. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p. VII.

was expatiating on his faithful service to the Peshwa, the latter sent down Dhondo Pant Godbole to carry out the confiscation order.²⁴ Jaswant immediately formed a corps for the protection of his jagir which he placed under Ajab Singh; at the same time he decided to make an all out effort to effect a settlement with the Peshwa.²⁵ He sent Paraji Pant to Poona to persuade Baji Rao II to recall Dhondo Pant and release the jagir lands of the Holkars. He was instructed to propose, if necessary, 'the payment of a considerable sum of money in return for so indulgent an act of compliance.'²⁶ Paraji's mission proved unsuccessful, as the Peshwa suspected that some kind of understanding existed between Jaswant Rao Holkar and Amrit Rao. The Peshwa was so much annoyed with Paraji for his visit to Amrit Rao that he refused to grant him an interview. Later on, through the intercession of Gopal Rao, Paraji Pant was allowed to pay a visit to the Durbar, but was not permitted to mention the demands of Holkar.²⁷

Dhondo Pant Godbole was also not recalled. With two battalions of infantry 1500 strong, ten pieces of cannon and four thousand cavalry, Godbole pitched his tent near the village of Kher Kusumba (12 miles north-east of Jalna).²⁸ On the 15th March, 1802, some troops under Jaswant Rao and Ajab Singh sallied forth and after a march of 14 miles arrived within cannon-shot of Godbole's line at about 2 p.m.²⁹ After a few discharges from the guns Jaswant's

24. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p. VII.

25. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p.5, Letter of Collins to the Governor General, April 3, 1802.

26. Wajai-Holkar, f. 109a.

27. Khare, XIII, 7413.

28. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p.6.

29. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p.6.

troops moved on in excellent order and broke down everything that came in their way. Godbole was no soldier. His cavalry though fought in a spirited manner but were mowed down by the enemy's grape-shots. His infantry was also routed with considerable loss.³⁰ Finding further struggle hopeless, Godbole made a hasty retreat to Malegaon.³¹ His guns, stores, camp and baggage fell into the hands of Jaswant. Godbole left upon the field two hundred dead and about twice that number wounded. Of the six Europeans belonging to his battalions two were killed and three taken prisoner, dangerously wounded.³² They had poured forth their blood for an unworthy leader. On the side of Jaswant, fifteen were killed and upwards of one hundred and fifty wounded. He advanced to Songarh and levied a contribution amounting to a lakh of rupees. Baji Rao II only talked about sending heavy reinforcements to Godbole, but actually nothing was done.³³ He no doubt asked Jaswant Rao Holkar not to advance any further and promised to bring about a settlement between him and Daulat Rao Sindhia.³⁴ The Peshwa was simply coquetting with him to gain time in order to call up reinforcements from far and near.³⁵

30. Khare, XIII, 6928; Asiatic Annual Register, 1804, p.58.

31. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p.6.

32. Ibid., p.7. "The Europeans noticed in Godbole's detachment are probably Portuguese from Goa, or some stragglers of other nations who may have been intercepted by Godbole on their way from the western coast, to seek employment with Sindhia, as it does not appear that the Peshwa is desirous of entertaining either English or French in his service." (Letter of Collins to the Governor General, April 3, 1802.)

33. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p.7.

34. Marathi Riyasat, p.194; Khare, XIV, 6387; Duff, Vol. II, p.205.

35. Khare, XIII, 7414.

3. Baji Rao II's preparations for war against Jaswant Rao Holkar.

Jaswant Rao's activities in the summer of 1802 created commotion in the Poona Durbar and the representatives of the various chiefs held prolonged deliberations³⁶ persuading the Peshwa to avoid the horrors of a civil war. Reconciliation was impossible as the empty friendly professions of both parties deceived nobody. Baji Rao II asked Jaswant to adopt a peaceful course and return from the south, but made no reference to the latter's demands.³⁷ Paraji Pant made a strong protest saying, "Here I am sitting at your door begging for justice for four months. Have you till now substantiated a single promise? How can I ask my master to return?"³⁸

Jaswant Rao himself was playing a double game. On the one hand he had loosened the reins of his freebooters to ravage the territory of the Peshwa; on the other he had been sending humble and respectful letters to him begging for justice. He talked of peace all the time and made presents of elephants and horses to his master, but did not desist from making raids and creating tumult in his territory. Once he fell upon Ahmadnagar with great fury and in another raid razed to the ground Sindhia's grand palaces of Shrigonda and Jambgaon.³⁹ The main purpose of his campaign, he told the Peshwa, was to pay a visit to the temple of Jejuri; no one could believe it. Baji Rao II attributed the hostile conduct of Holkar mostly

36. Marathi Riyasat, p.195.

37. Bengal Secret Political Consultations, 1803, 21 February (1)

38. Sardesai, New History of the Marathas, Vol. III, p.370.

39. Ibid.

to the secret intrigues of Amrit Rao, Moroba Fadnavis and Gopal Rao.⁴⁰ The British Resident at Poona did not fully agree with this view. His idea was that Jaswant might have entered into correspondence with Amrit Rao and the Patwardhans⁴¹ and even if a plot had been meditated it was by no means ripe for being translated into action.⁴² It is significant in this connection to note that the cavalry of Jaswant Rao Holkar had arrived close to Nasik in July, 1802; but when it was known that the place belonged to Amrit Rao, they retired.⁴³ According to Dr. P.C. Gupta, the real object of Holkar's Deccan campaign was to take for himself the place which Sindhia had been occupying at Poona.⁴⁴

Whatever may have been behind the back of his mind Jaswant Rao Holkar was steadily moving in the direction of Poona with a powerful army. Bajji Rao II had no plans to meet the threat. He was living in the midst of conspiracies and rebellions and could depend on no body. The Mankari cavalry of the Peshwa, starving from arrears of pay, had mutinied under the leadership of Bhagwant Singh in June, 1802.⁴⁵ The Arabs in the service of Bajji Rao II, stationed near Pandharpur, followed the example of the Mankari cavalry, looted the bazars of Poona and sacked the village of Wahim. They were, however, firmly put down and their leaders were later on put to death.⁴⁶ Bajji Rao II felt that he stood absolutely

40. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p.15.

41. Bengal Secret Political Consultations, 1803, 21 February (58)

42. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p.16.

43. Ibid., p.14.

44. Gupta, Bajji Rao II and the Company, p.28.

45. Bengal Secret Political Consultations, 1803, 21 February (2)

46. Bombay Political Secret Proceedings, 1802, 25th September, 4453.

alone and friendless in his native country. He sent for Amrit Rao, who disgusted with the maladministration of the Peshwa, had retired to Nasik. Amrit Rao did not respond.⁴⁷ Gopal Rao Munshi, who had been in correspondence with Jaswant, was placed under arrest with his brother and son.⁴⁸

Baji Rao II hurriedly assembled and armed his army to meet Jaswant Rao Holkar. He strengthened the fortress of Purandhar as a base to fall back upon.⁴⁹ His force which at the end of June, 1802, had amounted to not more than 3,000 horse and 2,000 infantry gradually increased to 4000 cavalry and 1000 infantry.⁵⁰ The rank of officer was given to men like Qadir Khan, a city butcher 'who gave up his butcher's knife and took to arms.'⁵¹ A factory for casting guns was established near Parvati Hill and was put under the charge of Govind Rao Paranjpay.⁵² The Peshwa kept in readiness relays of palanquin bearers and detachments of horse for his speedy departure from Poona in case of danger.⁵³

4. Battle of Baramati.

Late in September 1802, a large army commanded by Fateh Singh Mane in person made their way north-westwards up the Nira river. The commander gave out that it was on a harmless visit to Jejuri (30 miles south-east of Poona) for worshipping the tutelary goddess of the Holkar family.⁵⁴ On the 8th October, Mane reached the out-

47. Bengal Secret Political Consultations, 1803, 21st February (35)

48. Khare, XIV, 6399; Bengal Secret Political Consultations, 1803, 21 February (2).

49. Bengal Secret Political Consultations, 1803, 21st February (40)

50. Ibid.

51. Khare, XIV, 6405.

52. Ibid.

53. Bengal Secret Political Consultations, 1803, 21st February (40)

54. Khare, XIV, 6447, 6448; Sarkar, Fall of the Mughal Empire, Vol. IV, p.202.

skirts of Baramati.⁵⁵ Nana Purandare, the commander of the Peshwa's detachment encamped at Jalgaon (seven miles west of Baramati), and moved with all his forces to check Mane's advance. Fateh Singh Mane sent word to Purandare that this was not the kind of reception he had all along been expecting;⁵⁶ The advisers of Bajji Rao II had told him that Fateh Singh would not dare to fire on the zari Patka or the national flag. Nana Purandare, therefore, had been instructed to plant the royal standard in front of his ranks.⁵⁷ Surprisingly enough it was Nana Purandare who took the offensive and opened fire on Fateh Singh Mane.⁵⁸ Mane, an adept in ceremonious courtesy, maintained perfect calm and waited till 50 shots had been fired from under the zari patka. After the 50th discharge from Purandare's guns had been counted, Mane's horsemen charged the confused and wavering ranks of the enemy.⁵⁹ The commanders of the Peshwa's force at Baramati were Purandhare, Pandoji Kunjar and Ganpat Rao Panse.⁶⁰ Panse, who had the charge of artillery, was badly wounded;⁶¹ other commanders, unable to stand before Mane, galloped away from the field. It was a brilliant charge from the Holkar's side and scattered the leaderless followers of the Peshwa right and left.⁶² Only one man, Maloji Ghorpade, with

55. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p.28, "The village of Baramati is but twenty kos from Poona, a distance which to Mane is little more than a forced march."

56. Waqai-Holkar, f. 107a.

57. Khare, XIV, 6448, 6449.

58. Sarkar, Fall of the Mughal Empire, Vol. IV, p.204.

59. Ibid., Close reports to the Governor-General on the 10th October, 1802, "Purandhare is said to have meditated an attack, but Mane anticipating his intention, advanced at 10 in the forenoon and commenced an action." (Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol.X,p.24)

60. Sarkar, Fall of the Mughal Empire, Vol.IV, p.204. According to Mohan Singh, the force of the Peshwa was under Baba Phadke (Waqai-Holkar, f. 106b).

61. Waqai-Holkar, f. 106b.

62. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p.24.

his small personal contingent, made a vain attempt to check the fury of the assault. His charges⁶³ was speared to death and he himself received five wounds. Ghorpade fell down from his horse after giving an obstinate fight.⁶³ So irregular had been the fight that even after three days of the battle, Pandoji could not be traced. The entire camp, including 34 guns⁶⁴ and the elephant carrying the golden banner on its back, was seized by Mane.⁶⁵ The Zari Patka was torn from the staff to save the disgrace of its capture by the enemy and brought back by one of the fugitives. Fateh Sinch acted with moderation after the victory. He was polite in address and generous on the whole to the vanquished.⁶⁶ He carefully dressed the wounds of Maloji Ghorpade, placed him in a palki and set him free. The flag-staff was sent back to Purandare at Kumbhar-Balna (near Saswad).⁶⁷

The victory of Mane at Baramati caused extreme panic at Poona. Close wrote, "Amidst the general confusion the Peshwa adheres to his dwelling which is guarded about by 2000 infantry and a party of cavalry. Saddled horses are always ready at the different gates and every circumstance indicates that he is under constant alarms."⁶⁸ The break-down in the administration gave rise to lawlessness. Raiding bands of Pindaris carried their depredations upto the very outskirts of the city. So insecure did the people

63. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p.24.

64. Waqai-Holkar, f. 107a.

65. Bengal Secret Political Consultations, 21st February (46).^{1803,}

66. Khare, XIV, 6449; Marathi Riyasat, p.199.

67. Sarkar, Fall of the Mughal Empire, Vol. IV, p.204.

68. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p.27.

feel that the cultivators cut their unripe crop feeling that it was not safe to leave it standing in the field. The collectors of revenue tried to squeeze everything out of the peasantry saying that they were collecting arrears.⁶⁹ The Resident of Poona wrote to the Governor of Bombay on the 20th October that 'the Peshwa was not much master of his own will.'⁷⁰ In fear of his personal safety, Bajji Rao II secretly sent his agent Raghunath Rao to the British Resident to enter into a general defensive alliance with the Company.⁷¹ He also sent off all his jewels and the ladies of his family, including Chimnaji's wife and widows of Nana Fadnavis, to the strong hillport of Sinhgarh.⁷² The rottenness of his administration was completely exposed and Bajji Rao II stood helpless before his enemies.

5. The Battle of Hadapsar.

Jaswant Rao Holkar congratulated and rewarded Fateh Singh Mane on his success at Baramati⁷³ and rapidly moved southwards from Parner. He met Mane at Moreshwar, twelve miles east of Jejuri and 16 miles north-west of Medad (Baramati) on the 14th October, 1802. On the 17th he visited the shrine of Jejuri and exacted contributions from rich priests and traders.⁷⁴ From Baramati Jaswant Rao had sent a courteous letter to the Peshwa: "My dispute is with Sindhia only, which I am prepared to settle in my own way. You are only to act the master, let me act the servant."⁷⁵ For this purpose

69. Martin, Wellesley's Despatches, Vol. V, p.9.

70. Ibid.

71. Bengal Secret Political Consultations, 1803, 21 February (46)

72. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p.28.

73. Waghai-Holkar, f.107a.

74. Sarkar, Fall of the Mughal Empire, Vol. IV, p.205.

75. Marathi Riyasat, pp.200-201; Sardesai, New History of the Marathas, Vol. III, p.373.

he requested Bajji Rao II to send Balaji Kunjar, Dajiba Deshmukh, Babu Rao Angria, and Sindhia's wakil Nimbaji Bhaskar to his camp.⁷⁶ The letter of Jaswant Rao was received at Poona on the 23rd October.⁷⁷ None of the men whom Holkar had mentioned in his letter could be prevailed upon to visit him as 'they had worked out the brutal sentence of death on Vithoji Holkar and they knew, only too well, what they were to expect from Vithoji's brother.'⁷⁸ Next day, the Peshwa sent four servants of third-rate rank - Raghunath Dhond Bhagvat, Abaji Shankar, Balaji Nayak and Narayan Rao Vaidya.⁷⁹ They reached Holkar's camp near Theur at midnight.⁸⁰ Jaswant refused to see them saying, "Why should Kunjar avoid to see me Kunjar alone opposes reconciliation and unless he comes, all talks of peace must end. I will obtain redress tomorrow on the battlefield."⁸¹ The baffled envoys of the Peshwa returned to Poona before dawn, held another conference and urged their master to fight.⁸² The same advice was given by Sindhia's general Sadashiv Bhaskar. The latter prevented the Peshwa from leaving the city and boasted, "We shall force Jaswant Rao Holkar to flee away by our battalion tactics and our grapeshot, swivel gunfire, shells and musketry fire. Your Highness will have only to look at the show from a distance."⁸³

Negotiations having failed, both sides were equally eager for

76. Khare, XIV, 6466.

77. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p.30.

78. Sarkar, Fall of the Mughal Empire, Vol. IV, p.206.

79. Marathi Riyasat, pp.201-202; Gupta, Bajji Rao II and the Company, p.35.

80. Sarkar, Fall of the Mughal Empire, Vol. IV, p.206.

81. Khare, XIV, 6471.

82. Marathi Riyasat, p.202.

83. Bengal Secret Political Consultations, 21 February (48)

appeal to arms. It was the morning of Diwali, the 25th of October, 1802, when 'Maharashtra was to have the customary bath not in oil and hot water but in blood.'⁸⁴ Jaswant sent word giving the Peshwa two hours in the morning. The cowardly Peshwa ate early a very hurried breakfast and then began making preparations for the flight. His favourite pimp Baloji Kunjar forcibly carried him to Sindhia's camp.⁸⁵ Sadashiv Bhaskar came out of his encampment at Wanowri and drew up his men on the plain stretching eastwards from his camp to Hadapsar with their faces to the rising sun and back to the city of Poona. Jaswant's troops moved from Kavdi to Hadapsar to measure their strength against the enemy and took post opposite them, facing the west.⁸⁶

It is important to note here the total strength of the rival hosts. "Holkar brought into the field an army superior in both numbers and quality."⁸⁷ His army consisted of 16 battalions of European trained sepoys and 2000 indigenous but doughty Pathan musketeers, besides 6000 irregulars (mostly Ruhelas and other professional soldiers) - a total of 19,000.⁸⁸ The European trained infantry of Holkar consisted of 4 battalions under Major Hardinge, 5 under Vickers, 3 under Dod and 4 under Armstrong.⁸⁹ Jaswant Rao Holkar had a strong cavalry support of 1,25,000 horsemen who had proved themselves the best in India.⁹⁰ They were not only expert in Cossack

84. Sardesai, New History of the Marathas, Vol. III, p.374.

85. Ibid.

86. Sarkar, Fall of the Mughal Empire, Vol. IV, p.207.

87. Compton, European Military Adventurers of Hindustan, p.279.

88. Basawan Lal, Tr., p.164; Sarkar, Fall of the Mughal Empire, Vol. IV, p.208.

89. Sarkar, Fall of the Mughal Empire, Vol. IV, p.208.

90. Asiatic Annual Register, 1803, p.54.

tactics but knew how to hurl themselves upon the opponent in an impetuous charge and snatch a victory. As George Thomas described, "Holkar's cavalry are superior to those of Sindhia, being better officered and more correspondent with the real Maratha custom of predatory warfare."⁹¹ Jaswant Rao had 100 guns at a moderate estimate.⁹² Sadashiv Bhaskar fielded eleven battalions of trained sepoys (7,500 strong) consisting of 4 battalions of Pohlmann's brigade under Captain Dawes and 7 battalions of Ambaji Ingle under Shaikh Qalb Ali.⁹³ The four battalions (2500 muskets) of the Peshwa were haphazardly recruited and imperfectly drilled and badly paid. They were truly the Peshwa's '6000 rabble on horseback.'⁹⁴ Sadashiv Bhaskar's command included 68,000 cavalry of his own who were mostly Marathas and 'by no means of so brave a character as the Pathans and other Musalmans who chiefly compose Holkar's horse.'⁹⁵ Daulat Rao Sindhia's sepoys were led by a Eurasian youth Captain Dawes, a Captain Catts, a bad named Ensign Douglas and a vagrant Frenchman, Monsieur Honore.⁹⁶

The army of Jaswant Rao Holkar took post early in the morning of October 25th, 1802, in the plain of Hadapsar. Holkar's right wing at the northern end of the line was commanded by Mir Khan and then his battle line was continued southwards by 16 battalions of

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91. Francklin, *Military Memoir of George Thomas*, p.367.
 92. Compton, *European Military Adventurers of Hindustan*, p.280. According to Basawan Lal, Jaswant Rao had at least 200 guns. (Tr., p.164).
 93. Compton, *European Military Adventurers of Hindustan*, p.279; Basawan Lal, Tr., p.164; Martin, *Wellesley's Despatches*, Vol. V, p.10.
 94. Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol. IV, p.207.
 95. Letter of an English officer in Holkar's camp, *Asiatic Annual Register*, 1803, p.59. Mohan Singh writes, "The enemy too drew up their ranks and appeared on the field of battle in a body of 60,000 cavalry with the golden banner." (Waqai-Holkar, f.109b)
 96. Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol. IV, pp.207-208.

European-trained sepoy. On the left wing were stationed Fateh Singh's war-seasoned musketeers and Shahamat Khan's Pathan hordes.⁹⁷ The second line of Jaswant was formed by his indigenous cavalry - "again counting from the right to the left, in this order - Amir Khan, Ruhela and Bangash mercenaries, the family contingent of the Holkars (Khande Fauj), the Deccan cavalry under Nago Shivaji Shenvi, the Hindustani horse (mostly muslim) under Bhawani Shankar and Mane's own mounted troops."⁹⁸ Behind the second line Jaswant himself took up his position. He sat on horseback on a hillock surrounded by his personal guards (huzurat).⁹⁹ There was something in his face and in the piercing expression of one of his eyes that compelled implicit obedience.

The rear of the army of Sadashiv Bhaskar was sheltered by the city of Poona. The four battalions of Pohlmann's brigade under Captain Dawes formed the right of the centre with the artillery in front and seven battalions of Ambaji Ingolia led by Qalb Ali Khan on Dawes' left.¹⁰⁰ On the left wing the Deccan cavalry was commanded by Sadashiv Bhaskar himself. On the right were posted the four battalions of the Peshwa's infantry and 'his 6000 rabble on horseback.'¹⁰¹

The battle commenced with a warm cannonade about half-past nine in the morning.¹⁰² Jaswant Rao Holkar, acting the part of a loyal

97. Sarkar, Fall of the Mughal Empire, Vol. IV, p.208. According to Basawan Lal, Fateh Singh's musketeers were posted on the right wing. (Tr., p.165).

98. Sarkar, Fall of the Mughal Empire, Vol. IV, p.208.

99. Compton, European Military Adventurers of Hindustan, p.280; Malcolm, Memoirs of Central India, Vol. I, p.227.

100. Basawan Lal, Tr., p.166.

101. Ibid.

102. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p.33; Mill, History of British India, Vol. VI, p.274; Compton, European Military Adventurers of Hindustan, p.280.

subject, restrained his men until 25 shots were received from under the Zari Patka. The incessant cannonade lasted for four hours and at one O'clock in the afternoon the battle lines came closer together.¹⁰³ Dawes advanced with his battalions. For some time he was not opposed. Perhaps the strategy was to lure him within the range of Holkar's guns.¹⁰⁴ Mir Khan made a wrong calculation. Thinking that the enemy horse had been shaken by the long cannonade, delivered an ill-timed charge to roll it up.¹⁰⁵ The contingents of Jaswant Rao Holkar under Harnath, Najib Khan, Wajid Ali Khan, Chimna Bhau and Bhawani Shankar also came down from the left flank and assembled for combat.¹⁰⁶ Together they made a dense crowd on which De Boigne's quickfiring brass guns vomitted fire making woeful gaps in the Holkar's ranks. Seizing the advantage, Sadashiv's massed squadrons fell pell-mell upon the crowd of disordered Pathan ranks.¹⁰⁷ It was a tense moment. The pressure was, however, soon relieved by the timely move of Col. Hardinge who wheeled round with his brigade to the rescue of Holkar's cavalry and threw Qalb Ali's brigade (the flank of Sindhia's cavalry) into disorder.¹⁰⁸ Jaswant also recovered from the momentary shock and springing on his horse and drawing his sword called out, "....We must not spare our persons but using every exertion, must now earn a name that shall appear on the page of history."¹⁰⁹ Jaswant swept with lightning speed through the line of

103. Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol. IV, p.209.

104. Compton, *European Military Adventurers of Hindustan*, p.280.

105. Basawan Lal, *Tr.*, p.166.

106. *Waqai-Holkar*, f. 110a.

107. Compton, *European Military Adventurers of Hindustan*, p.280.

108. *Ibid.*

109. Basawan Lal, *Tr.*, p.169.

guns, sabred the gunners who came in his way and fell upon the battalions of Qalb Ali Khan like a hungry tiger upon a herd of deer.¹¹⁰ Jaswant himself was the first person who carried his horse to the mouth of the guns. He said to his soldiers, "As for me, I have no intention of surviving this day; if I do not get victory where can I fly?"¹¹¹ He received three sword cuts in his arms,¹¹² but continued to fight even more vigorously than before. The battalions of Qalb Ali Khan, already shaken by the steady attack of Major Hardinge, 'now scattered before Holkar's rush like chaff before the wind.'¹¹³ The Peshwa's contingent, which had never earned a good reputation for courage, fled, as expected with breathless speed. Their master's performance was no better. Bajji Rao II, 'quitting on his elephant near Ghasirani's tank had enjoyed the excitement of the battle from a safe distance for two hours and then set the first example of flight to his men.'¹¹⁴ Young Chimnaji wished to stay on, but he was carried away by Bajji Rao II much against his will.¹¹⁵ Fateh Singh Mane turned the retreat of the Peshwa's contingent into a hopeless rout and chased them out of sight from the battlefield. Captain Dawes with his four battalions made a vain attempt to check the fury of the assault, but disciplined valour was of no avail against the crushing superiority of Holkar.¹¹⁶ Just then happened another unforeseen accident which sealed the fate

110. Sarkar, Fall of the Mughal Empire, Vol. IV, p.209.

111. Malcolm, Memoirs of Central India, Vol. I, p.228.

112. Holkarshahichya Itihasachi Sadhane, Vol. II, p.41 - "

"मामचे दातास मात्र तीन जखमा तरवारीच्या हलक्याने लागल्या आहेत."

" (Letter of Jaswant Rao Holkar to Bharmal Holkar). According to Mohan Singh, Jaswant received only one sword-cut (Waqai-Holkar, f. 110a).

113. Khare, XIV, 7434, 7435.

114. Holkaranchi Kaifyat, pp. 94-95.

115. Sardesai, New History of the Marathas, Vol. III, p.374.

116. Basawan Lal, Tr., p.172.

of Sindhia's force. Some tumbrils of munition in their midst blew up and increased the confusion.¹¹⁷ No escape was possible and the sepoys of Dawes fought till they were almost annihilated. Three out of the four European officers including Dawes, Captain Catts and Ensign Douglas and six hundred men out of the total strength of 1,400 were killed or wounded.¹¹⁸ Sadashiv Bhaskar was killed fighting against Mir Khan.¹¹⁹ Sindhia's defeat at the battle of Hadapsar was complete.

Jaswant Rao Holkar became master of the whole of Sindhia's baggage, guns and store. L.F. Smith, a British officer of Holkar's army, reported that at least 5000 were killed and wounded on Sindhia's side.¹²⁰ According to a Maratha news-writer in Poona three thousand men of Sindhia were killed.¹²¹ In the force of the Vinchurkar sardar of the Peshwa alone three hundred men were killed and about the same number wounded.¹²² Holkar's casualties amounted to 1600 men,¹²³ including Vickers wounded and Colonel Hardinge killed by a cannon-shot towards the close of the action.¹²⁴ Bhawani Shankar who was present on the battlefield thus describes the scene, "The dead formed hillocks on the battlefield supplying food to crows and jackals till eternity."¹²⁵

The day of the battle of Hadapsar, the 25th of October, 1802, was incidentally also the Dipavali or the feast of lamps for the

117. Compton, European Military Adventurers of Hindustan, p.281.

118. Sarkar, Fall of the Mughal Empire, Vol. IV, p.210.

119. Basawan Lal, Tr., p.171. Close wrongly reported to Wellesley that Sadashiv Bhaskar was supposed to have escaped with the greater part of his horse. (Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p.33.)

120. Asiatic Annual Register, 1803, Bengal Occurrences, p.61.

121. Khare, XIV, 6471.

122. Sarkar, Fall of the Mughal Empire, Vol. IV, p.211.

123. Asiatic Annual Register, 1804, p.81.

124. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p.33.

125. Waqai-Holkar, f. 110a.

Hindus. The occasion was celebrated in the traditional festive way all over the country with a flood of light, but for Maharashtra it proved to be the dawn of darkness. "A very merry Dipavali, indeed;" - wrote the Patwardhan's local agent in the bitterness of his heart.¹²⁶ A greater loss than this huge wastage of man-power was the loss of liberty the foundation of which had been laid nearly hundred and fifty years ago by the great Shivaji. Sir J.N. Sarkar rightly remarks: "The last fruit of the Civil War in the loss of national liberty and Holkar's triumph made the Peshwa an English vassal."¹²⁷ It is easy to understand the Civil War in Maharashtra in 1802 if it is remembered that the last Peshwa and the other Maratha chiefs lived in a kind of feudal honeymoon, learning nothing, forgetting nothing and foreseeing nothing.

126. Sarkar, Fall of the Mughal Empire, Vol. IV, p.212.

127. Ibid., p.215.

CHAPTER VII

Jaswant Rao Holkar's ascendancy at Poona.

(12th November, 1802 - 26th February, 1803).

1. Jaswant Rao Holkar's activities upto the 12th November, 1802.

The city of Poona was so filled with confusion and alarm during the Battle of Hadapsar that though it was the day of Diwali there was no illumination and not even fire was lighted in any kitchen.¹ The people did not desire the success of Jaswant Rao Holkar whose licentious horde of followers - 'the two-legged tigers and their servile jackals' - had turned the classic land of Malwa, the most fruitful part of Khandesh and the Dash districts of Maharashtra into wilderness. But they knew that the villainous Pindaris of Sindhia² were equally a menace to that masterless city. The sack of the city was sure to follow, whichever side won.

"When the tide of battle showed the first sign of turning against them, the camp followers and tradesmen of Sindhia's army made a rush into Puna for safety. But the ruffians of the city attacked and robbed them of all that they were carrying."³ The fugitive soldiers of Sindhia's army were stripped of their arms, dress and money and were driven out into the fields. The wounded among Sindhia's infantry men were refused food and shelter and left to perish in the streets of the city like dogs. Being all North Indians by race, in Maratha eyes they were foreigners.⁴ Daulat Rao Sindhia did not act with promptitude and decision. The Ujjain Akhbars mention that he sent an urgent message to Nago Pant to join

1. Sarkar, Fall of the Mughal Empire, Vol. IV, p.212.

2. Khare, XIV, 6465.

3. Sarkar, Fall of the Mughal Empire, Vol. IV, p.211.

4. Khare, XIV, 6465; Gulgule, Letter of 7th November, 1803.

him. He also expected that Gopal Bhaui, who was creating trouble on the Nizam's frontier, would hasten towards Ahmadnagar and assume the general command of his army.⁵

Known for hasty retreats, the Peshwa returned precipitately from the battlefield of Hadapsar to the outskirts of Poona. Many believed that 'Holkar's object was to obtain possession of the Peshwa's person.'⁶ But as a matter of fact Jaswant deliberately refrained from it and sent him a cartload of food;⁷ later, the ladies of the Peshwa's family were also escorted back as a show of obedience.⁸ Bajji Rao II spent a restless night at Wadgaon, left the place next day and took the road to Sinhagarh. He arrived there with some of his chiefs, about 7000 horse, some infantry and five guns.⁹ He made for Dhivid¹⁰ in the ghats with only 25 horsemen.¹¹ On the 27th October, the Peshwa with Chimnaji, Balaji Kunjar and Sindhian guards, crossed the Western Ghat at midnight.¹² The inhabitants of Mahad were so terrified at the approach of Bajji Rao II that they began to flock into Dasgaon in large numbers. He spent a month at Birwadi near Mahad spinning out negotiations with the English for their support.¹³ It is indeed a tragedy that the last

5. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p.35. Letter of B. Close to the Governor General, October 30, 1803.

6. Owen, A Selection from Wellesley's Despatches, p.214.

7. Sardesai, New History of the Marathas, Vol. III, p.379.

8. Asiatic Annual Register, 1804, p.92.

9. Khare, XIV, 6470. Basawan Lal writes, "Baji Rao discharged all his troops except nine thousand mankuree horse and eighteen thousand foot armed with Dakhin matchlocks." (Tr., p.174).

10. Papers re Mahratta War, 1803, p.342; Dhivid is written as Dahivad in Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p.36.

11. Papers re Mahratta War, 1803, p.342.

12. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p.35.

13. Ibid, pp.34-36.

fruit of the greatest achievement of Jaswant Rao Holkar was that it drove the Peshwa into the arms of the English.¹⁴

Jaswant Rao Holkar encamped at Wanwadi on the 29th October, 1802. The joy of his ^{victory} ~~city~~ at Hadapsar was marred by a mishap. Among the boxes of gold coins obtained in the field there was a box of gunpowder which caught fire from the match of a sepoy's musket. The explosion killed thirty five men.¹⁵ Jaswant himself had received three swordcuts in his arms at Hadapsar and the wounds healed in fifteen days.¹⁶ After the bath of recovery he rewarded each of his officers. On Bhawani Shankar was bestowed the title of Raja together with some land, a flag, an elephant, a horse, a fringed palki and 'control over all affairs great and small.' Murtaza Khan, Wahid Ali Khan, Shahamat Khan and Najib Khan were made 'nawabs' and each of them was given an elephant, some land, a flag and a standard. Achhe Singh was given a lakh of rupees and was ordered to raise a campoo.¹⁷

The city of Poona suffered less than what might have been expected.¹⁸ Earlier, Jaswant Rao had informed Aba Kale, a commander of the Peshwa, that it was not his intention to disturb the city.¹⁹ But having arrived at Poona, he did not hesitate to wreak vengeance on his enemies. Aba Kale was disgraced and beaten. Chinto Pant Deshmukh, Baijnath Bhatt and Anyaba Rahatekar were not spared.²⁰ The houses of Narayan Rao Vaidya, Balwant Rao Nagonath and Khande Rao Rastia were plundered.²¹ A general plunder, however, was stopped.

14. Sarkar, Fall of the Mughal Empire, Vol. IV, p.215.

15. Waqai-Holkar, f. 111b.

16. Holkarshahichya Itihasachi Sadhane, Vol. II, p.42.

17. Waqai-Holkar, f.113b.

18. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p.34.

19. Ibid.,

20. Khare, XIV, 6475, 6481, 6491; Mohan Singh writes, "Jaswant entered the city of Poona and engaged in escheating the houses of the nobles of renown, ruining and desolating the place." (Waqai-Holkar, f. 112a).

21. Marathā Riyasat, p.208; Khare, XIV, 6483, 6485, 6486, 6487, 6492.

Jaswant Rao proclaimed that if a soldier robbed even a cowri, he would be disembowelled and his body publicly exposed.²² A few of Holkar's Pindaris no doubt made their way into some of the streets of Poona. They were soon recalled; guards were posted in every street for protecting the inhabitants.²³ "Holkar continues to behave in a civil manner," wrote Close, the British Resident at Poona, on October 30, 1802 to the Governor General.²⁴ Jaswant Rao left the administration of the city in charge of Harnath Nago Jivaji who was also appointed General of the campoos and 'the supreme agent in all affairs.'²⁵ One Shaikhji was also associated with Harnath Nago Jivaji.²⁶ The Plumet Campoo was newly named as Lachman Campoo, Dudreneé Campoo as Ram Campoo and the Dodd Campoo as Khando Campoo.²⁷

"The success of Jeswunt Rao Holkar had completely established the ascendancy of his power in the Mahratta State,"²⁸ but he was hard pressed for money. His army was estimated at thirty thousand cavalry, eight or nine thousand infantry and a large train of artillery. These troops were in arrears and provisions were dear in his camp.²⁹ Jaswant Rao employed two of Bajji Rao II's ministers - Chintoo Pant Deshmukh and Vaijnath Pant - to raise nearly 40 lakhs of rupees from Poona.³⁰ The amount was promptly collected under the supervision of Harnath Singh who was 'an expert in oppressing people

22. Sarkar, Fall of the Mughal Empire, Vol. IV, p.212.

23. Bagawan Lal, Tr., p.173.

24. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p.34.

25. Waqai-Holkar, f. 113a.

26. Khare, XIV, 6475, 6481, 6491.

27. Waqai-Holkar, f. 113a.

28. Asiatic Annual Register, 1804, p.156.

29. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p.35.

30. Duff, Vol. II, p.223.

and slaying the poor.³¹ People paid in 'the vain hope of buying exemption from future pillage.'³² Jaswant Rao sent Fateh Singh Mantaji to the Baramati district to collect contributions and pay the soldiers under him.³³ Holkar's troops infested the intervening country from Junnar to Birwadi and turned it into a welter of lawlessness.³⁴ In a letter dated the 5th of November, 1802, Strachey wrote to the Governor General - "The tract of country from hence to Burhanpur is said by every traveller to be in a perfect state of desolation. The country round Poona is already deserted."³⁵

Jaswant Rao Holkar tried all that persuasion and diplomacy could do to win over the sympathy of Close, the British Resident at Poona. He requested Close to stay at Poona,³⁶ sent an invitation to him to come and see him on the 27th October and also had an interview with Assistant Resident Strachey.³⁷ Jaswant Rao tried to impress upon Close that his main purpose was to improve the tone of the Poona Government as Bajji Rao II had been misled by his advisers.³⁸ The astute British Resident at Poona kept himself free from commitments. His attitude was outwardly friendly, mild but firm. After the battle of Hadapsar, Close sent his agent to inquire about Jaswant's health and invited him to dinner at his house. Jaswant Rao accepted his invitation and gave the Resident 22 pieces of robes besides khilat for his followers.³⁹ When the officers of

31. Waqai-Holkar, f. 113a.

32. Duff, Vol. II, p.223.

33. Waqai-Holkar, f. 113a.

34. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p.40

35. Ibid., p.39.

36. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p.34.

37. Bengal Secret Political Consultations, 1803, 21 February (58)(59); Duff, Vol. II, p.208.

38. Ibid., Mill, Vol. VI, p.279.

39. Waqai-Holkar, f. 112a.

Holkar were busy raising contributions from Poona, Close sent a letter to Jaswant Rao saying that he would not permit his troops to molest any person belonging to the Residency. Although some of the Pindaris approached the Residency they refrained from doing any harm to it.⁴⁰

2. The New Regime at Poona.

After the flight of Bajji Rao II from Poona, Jaswant Rao for a moment thought of effecting a revolution in the Maratha State⁴¹ by abolishing the office of the Peshwa and releasing the Raja of Satara and investing him with the former authority of his house.⁴² But Jaswant realised in time that such an attempt would be looked upon with disfavour by Panse, Purandare and other chiefs at Poona because for all practical purposes the power of the Raja of Satara was long dead. He had, therefore, no other alternative but to persuade Amrit Rao to come to Poona and assume the headship of the State, reserving for himself the general command of the troops.⁴³

"Imrut Row", writes Valentia, "was certainly the chief cause of the Paishwa's misfortunes in having invited Holcar down to Poonah and correspond with him the whole time."⁴⁴ In fact, Amrit Rao had no wish to be dragged into limelight and he declined the invitation

40. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p.33.

41. Ibid., p.39.

42. Papers re Mahratta War, 1803, p.344; Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p.35, Letter of Close to the Governor General, October 30, 1802.

43. Martin, Wellesley's Despatches, Vol. III, p.5; Papers re Mahratta War, 1803, p.344.

44. George Valentia, Voyages and travels to India etc, Vol. II, p.134.

of Holkar 'on various pretences.'⁴⁵ He was afraid of Sindhia's power and also did not want to give umbrage to the English.⁴⁶ Besides, the new regime had yet to gain the confidence of the people. Jaswant Rao Holkar sent Mir Khan to bring Amrit Rao from Juner.⁴⁷ After some hesitation, Amrit Rao set out with his son Vinayak Rao on the 14th November. His reluctance was obvious from the fact that while on the way he wanted to send his waga-navis, Sadashiv Pandit, to Baji Rao II. Sadashiv expressed his doubts about his safe journey to Birwadi as Holkar's troops infested the intervening country.⁴⁸ Realising the impracticability of this plan, Amrit Rao proceeded on and on the 5th November reached Peth, a village about 30 miles from Poona. He arrived at Bopkhal in the suburb of Poona on the 7th.⁴⁹ As a mark of honour Jaswant sent a shutur (camel) to Amrit Rao before meeting him formally. Afterwards Amrit Rao was received with great honour by Jaswant Rao Holkar, Shahamat Khan, Nago Jivaji and Harnth Singh who proceeded on foot to welcome him. The booming of eighty guns announced the arrival of Amrit Rao at Poona.⁵⁰ A darbar was also held in the garden of Balwant Rao Wankri. Here Amrit Rao received a large number of visitors including Moroba Fadnavis, Naro Moreshwar, Baba Phadkia, Shridhar Pandit, Krishna Rao Chitnavis and Yesaji Ramchandrar - all officers of the Bhosle government - and Anand Rao, the vakil of the Nizam.⁵¹ A host of other Maratha chiefs and officers such as Hanumant Rao, Durekar, Pilaji Jaghu, Anand Rao

45. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p.39; Khare, XIV, 7443.

46. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p.40.

47. Khare, XIV, 6478; Basawan Lal, Tr., p.175.

48. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p.40.

49. Ibid.

50. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p.41.

51. Ibid., Khare, XIV, 6485; Papers re Mahratta War, 1803, p.355.

Sindhia, Sadashiv Ramchandar, Balwant Rao Kishan, Ramchandar Madho, Lakhoda Phadke, Madho Rao Phadke, Kashi Rao, Shyam Rao Totnavis, Raghu Pandit Mistari and many others were also introduced.⁵² A new Zari Patka was set up. Letters were sent to many Maratha chiefs inviting them to the city. The old adherents of Nana Fadnavis, who had already been liberated from confinement by Jaswant Rao Holkar, gathered round Amrit Rao at Poona.⁵³ The darbar of Amrit Rao was literally thronged with all ranks of people.⁵⁴ Basawan Lal wrongly states that Amrit Rao 'was seated on the Peshwa's musnad.'⁵⁵ Though Jaswant clung to the plan of seating Amrit Rao's son or the Satara Raja on the musnad, Amrit Rao discouraged such extreme measures.⁵⁶ As Close wrote to the Governor General on November 16, 1802, "Amrit Rao still holds out, that the Peshwa will be induced to return to his capital and recommends that nothing should be done at present towards effecting a revolution. The Peshwa still corresponds with him and probably favours the above hope."⁵⁷ The negotiations between Amrit Rao and the Peshwa for the latter's return to Poona came to naught. Unfortunately, at this time Holkar's sober adviser, Parashar Dadaji, died of a short fever on the 18th November. A universally respected man, he was 'the cementing factor between the two warring elements.'⁵⁸ All hopes of a peaceful settlement now receded to the background and Close wrote the Governor of Bombay, "that the Peshwa,

52. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p.42.

53. Forrest, Selections from State Papers, pp.560-561.

54. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p.42.

55. Basawan Lal, Tr., p.175.

56. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p.48; Khare, XIV, 7638, 7639; Duff, Vol. II, pp.223-224.

57. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p.48.

58. Sardesai, New History of the Marathas, Vol. III, p.381.

rather than accommodate with Holkar and Amrit Rao will wait for the support of Sindhia or throw himself decidedly into the arms of the English."⁵⁹

During this interval Jaswant Rao was also meditating a bold plan for obtaining possession of the Peshwa's person. According to Basawan Lal, Amrit Rao was requested by Jaswant to pay two crores of rupees in cash for effecting a revolution favourable to him. It was agreed upon that one crore of rupees was to be collected from Poona and the remainder, Amrit Rao promised to pay on Baji Rao II's 'being driven out of Marh or brought to submit in person.' Accordingly, Mir Khan was sent with one thousand horse and four thousand infantry to seize the person of the Peshwa.⁶⁰ He had to encounter great difficulties in marching through broken and hilly jungly paths.⁶¹ The Peshwa immediately left Mahad for Suvarnadurg. Mir Khan besieged the fort of Mahad which was in charge of Shamsheer Bahadur. Basawan Lal claims that the fort 'surrendered to the Ameer without a shot being fired.'⁶² After spending fifteen days in rejoicings, Mir Khan wrote to the Peshwa that he was prepared to mediate a reconciliation between him and Jaswant Rao Holkar. The Peshwa tore the letter of Mir Khan to pieces and sent back a verbal answer that he was about to leave Suvarnadurg but 'his country, if no longer to be his own,

59. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p.40.

60. Basawan Lal, Tr., pp. 176-177. Many in the British political circle believed that Mir Khan marched with a large force to effect the release of Savai Madhav Rao's widow and bring her back to Poona. The march of his army frightened Baji Rao II so much that he fled to Suvarnadurg. (Papers re Mahratta War, pp. 367-369; Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p.43.)

61. Basawan Lal, Tr., p.178.

62. Ibid., p.179.

should not be governed by any other Mahratta."⁶³ On the advice of Khande Rao Raste, the Peshwa left Suvarnadurg, boarded a British ship named Herculean and sailed for Bassein. During his journey, Baji Rao II received splendid reception and salutes of gunfire from all British ships and local agents on the coast. The ship halted, on the Peshwa's request, at Revdanda for two days and reached Bassein on the 16th December.⁶⁴ Meanwhile, a party of Holkar's troops had come to Suvarnadurg and carried away with them Anand Rao, the killadar of the place. Before capturing the fort Mir Khan had written to the officers of the Peshwa's garrison that they should better return with their master to Poona.⁶⁵

"The Peshwa's flight from Poona," wrote Lord Wellesley, "seemed to hold out a very favourable opportunity for establishing in the most complete manner the interests of the British power in the Mahratta Empire."⁶⁶ No one understood better than Close what the Governor General meant and hence transacted all his political business in such a way as to attain that objective.⁶⁷ It is important to note that Lord Wellesley, though determined to reinstate the Peshwa in his government, was not in favour of the immediate advance of the company's troops to Poona. At that stage Lord Wellesley wanted to avoid a clash with both Holkar and Sindhia, for he knew that the continuance of conflict between Holkar and Sindhia would firstly keep

63. Basawan Lal, Tr., p.179.

64. Papers re Mahratta War, 1803, pp. 372, 387.

65. Basawan Lal, Tr., p.180.

66. Wellesley, History of Events and Transactions in India, p.23.

67. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p.63, Letter of B. Close to J.A. Grant, Secretary to the Government, Bombay, January 20, 1803.

their eyes away from the Peshwa's affairs and secondly weaken the power of both. He also hesitated on the ground that the immediate march of the Company's troops might involve the English in hostilities with Holkar or even induce Jaswant Rao and Daulat Rao to make a joint effort. Moreover, as the Governor General wrote to Close, "A further advantage of a delay in the advance of the troops may be that it may perhaps enable you to improve the terms of the defensive alliance, by attaining the Peshwa's consent to those conditions which he has hitherto rejected."⁶⁸

After a time Amrit Rao's attitude changed and he and Jaswant Rao Holkar used every possible argument to convince Close of the justice of the cause of the party in power at Poona. They were anxious 'to obtain the countenance of British Government in sanctioning the projected revolution in government of the Mahratta Empire.'⁶⁹ They failed and herein lay one of the potent causes of the failure of the New Regime. In the diplomatic tussel with the Poona party Close emerged victorious. Manifestly possessing a pleasing personality, Close knew how to be firm if the situation demanded it. About him Sir James Mackintosh wrote, "He is a very superior man who might easily pass among common observers for a common man."⁷⁰ After Amrit Rao's arrival at Poona, Close applied to Jaswant for permission to leave the city.⁷¹ On the 10th November, Jaswant Rao returned him a polite answer and offered to help him with an escort because of the

68. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p.82.

69. Martin, Wellesley's Despatches, Vol. III, p.10.

70. Parasnis, Poona in Bygone Days, p.59.

71. Forrest, Selections from State Papers, p.562.

lawless practices of the Pindaris and his own irregular camp followers.⁷² Close met Amrit Rao and Jaswant in the evening of November 16, 1802. Amrit Rao's manner was mild and pleasing. Holkar, who was a bit indifferent, spoke only two or three times during the conversation and that not on any 'very material point.' Amrit Rao attributed the Peshwa's flight from Poona to his youthful thoughtlessness and asked for the Resident's advice. Close did not commit himself in any way.⁷³

It is difficult to understand why Sardesai maintains that Arthur Wellesley and Close were inclined to support the New Regime at Poona.⁷⁴ It is disproved by the letter of N.B. Edmonstone, Secretary to British Government, to Close on November 16, 1802 - "His Excellency approves the whole of your conduct during the late negotiation, in the course of which His Excellency considers that you have manifested great agility, firmness and zeal for the public interests."⁷⁵ Close had remained attached throughout to the cause of Bajji Rao II and continued to guide and advise him from Poona.⁷⁶ On the 18th November, Amrit Rao paid the return visit to Close who was determined to leave Poona. On the 21st Close received his passport bearing Amrit Rao's seal, but his departure was delayed by a message that Holkar wanted to see him before he left.⁷⁷ According to Basawan Lal, it was because Mir Khan was not in favour of allowing Close to leave Poona.⁷⁸ In

72. Forrest, Selections from State Papers, pp. 569-571.

73. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, pp.46-48.

74. Sardesai, New History of the Marathas, Vol. III, p.381.

75. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p.45.

76. Ibid., p. XII.

77. Forrest, Selections from State Papers, pp.572-574.

78. Basawan Lal, Tr., p.176.

fact, Close had received correct information through secret channels that Jaswant Rao intended to capture the Peshwa and wanted the English Resident to postpone his departure till then.⁷⁹ After the failure of Mir Khan's attempt, Jaswant Rao no longer tried to prevent the departure of Close. The British Resident paid a visit to Holkar on the 26th November.⁸⁰ Jaswant Rao said that he wished to have Close as his friend and adviser in bringing about reconciliation between him and the Peshwa. Close replied that it would be of no use unless both parties agreed to refer their differences to him. Jaswant then asked Close that if their differences were adjusted would he return to Poona. Close replied that it was not possible except under 'His Lordship's instructions.'⁸¹ Holkar then put a penetrating question, rather embarrassing for Close, that should the Resident fail to adjust his differences with the Peshwa, what was to happen then? The shrewd diplomat replied smiling that 'he did not imagine that Jaswant was at any time very solicitous about future events.'⁸² Jaswant Rao took it as a compliment. Close met Amrit Rao next day and left Poona in the early morning of the 28th November.⁸³

Close met Baji Rao II at Bassein on the 16th December and next day began discussions with him regarding the terms of the proposed treaty. Daulat Rao Sindhia, apprised of what was happening at Bassein, sent his adviser Baburao Angre to meet Baji Rao II and request him

79. Forrest, Selections from State Papers, pp. 572-574.

80. Ibid., p. 575.

81. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p. 53.

82. Ibid.

83. Martin, Wellesley's Despatches, Vol. III, p. 10; Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p. 53.

not to take any irrevocable step. Jaswant Rao Holkar, too, offered to go there himself and meet the Peshwa all alone in order to dissuade him from the course he had adopted. These offers were of no avail whatsoever. Balavantrao Nagnath and Raghunath Janardan, the two advisers of the Peshwa, lost no opportunity of convincing their master about British integrity, magnanimity and regard for plighted word.⁸⁴ Besides, the threat of Close also had the desired effect.⁸⁵ The proposals which the Peshwa had made on the 25th October supplied the basis for the famous treaty of Bassein. Described as a general defensive alliance, the Treaty of Bassein was signed, sealed and delivered a few minutes before the commencement of the new year and ratified by the Governor General on the 18th March, 1803.⁸⁶ By the Treaty, the Peshwa agreed to receive from the Company on a permanent basis no less than 6000 regular Native Infantry with the usual proportion of field pieces and European artillerymen attached and with the proper equipment of warlike stores and ammunitions.⁸⁷ For the payment of these troops, the Peshwa agreed to cede in perpetuity to the Company territories yielding an annual income of 26 lakhs of rupees.⁸⁸ These territories were situated in four different parts of the Peshwa's possessions - Gujarat and the territories south of it; territories on the south of the Tapti; territories between the Tapti and the Narmada and territories near the Tungabhadra.⁸⁹ Baji Rao II also relinquished for ever his right over the city of Surat. It was agreed that the Peshwa would abstain from war against the Nizam and

84. Sardesai, *New History of the Marathas*, Vol. III, p.382.

85. *Ibid.*, p.384.

86. *Poona Residency Correspondence*, Vol. X, p.59; *Duff*, Vol. II, p.225; *Khare*, XIV 7459-7471.

87. *Papers re Mahratta War*, 1803, p.395.

88. *Aitchison*, Vol. III, p.65.

89. *Papers re Mahratta War*, 1803, p.418.

accept British arbitration in case of disputes arising with him. All claims for chauth on the Nizam's dominion were given up. Bajji Rao II was to respect the treaty of friendship already contracted between the Gaekwad and the English. He was not to keep in his employment any European hostile to the English and was not to engage in hostilities with other states without previous consultation with the East India Company's Government.⁹⁰ Very few treaties in the history of this country have been the subject of so much controversy and criticism as the Treaty of Bassein. There is no denying the fact that by this treaty the head of the Maratha Confederacy was brought under the complete control of the Company and the Company got a lawful right to take steps for the preservation of the Peshwa's authority.⁹¹ Wrote Valentia, a contemporary English traveller, "The treaty of Bassein has in fact annihilated this Empire."⁹² The news of the Treaty of Bassein reached Poona on the New Year's day of 1803. Jaswant Rao attended by Mir Khan and Ganpat Rao Dewan met Amrit Rao and said, "Bajji Rao has destroyed the Maratha power. He has taken money from the English and given them territory. In the course of time they will seize the whole, as they have done in Mysore. What do you say to this? We must write to Sindhia to ascertain whether he has done all this with his consent. Do you think this is the case? You must write one letter and

90. Aitchison, Vol. VI, pp. 52-58; Gupta, Bajji Rao II and the Company, pp. 45-46.

91. Wellesley, A Vindication of the Late War, p. 18.

92. Valentia, Voyages and Travels, Vol. II, p. 134. By 'Empire' he meant the Maratha Empire.

I will dispatch another reporting what has passed and saying 'should the English uniting with Bajji Rao ascend, Sindhia and I should accommodate our difference and jointly oppose the British troops'.⁹³ Jaswant Rao Holkar also requested Ambaji to negotiate a peace between him and Sindhia which was so very important for organizing a strong coalition against the British.⁹⁴ At the same time he made a similar request to Raghujji Bhosle.⁹⁵ Sindhia also sent a special agent to Nagpur and stressing the need of a common endeavour to preserve national independence.⁹⁶

When all hope of the Peshwa's return to Poona was abandoned, Jaswant Rao proceeded with his plan of releasing the widow of Sawai Madhav Rao from Raigarh so that she might adopt the son of Amrit Rao. He sent four battalions of troops to bring her.⁹⁷ The Peshwa's anxiety on this score was so great that he urged Close to send a British corps to that place by way of Bankot. Close was confident that Holkar's success in this matter would be of little benefit to him. He told Bajji Rao II that his suggestion 'would be totally inconsistent with the plans of operation resolved on by the British Government.'⁹⁸

93. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p.60, Translation of Papers of Intelligence.

94. Ibid., p.138.

95. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. IX, p.133. Translation of a Persian Akhbar from Ujjain. Holkar requested Shridhar Lakshman and Krishna rao Madhav, two agents of Raghujji Bhosle, to induce their master to oppose the English.

96. Sardesai, New History of the Marathas, Vol. III, p.385.

97. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p.75; Khare, XIV, 7640.

98. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p. 75.

Jaswant Rao's conduct was singularly enigmatic at this period. While he was trying to organise a Maratha Confederacy, he wrote a letter to Close on the 4th January, 1803, making many suggestions for an adjustment with the Peshwa.⁹⁹ Wrote Holkar, "If any faults have been committed by me, let them be forgiven."¹⁰⁰ The following were the proposals of Jaswant.¹⁰¹

(1) Khande Rao was to be released together with his relations and dependents. A khilat of investiture was to be given to ^{him} me.

(2) Kashi Rao was to be delivered up.

(3) The Peshwa was to give Holkar one crore of rupees for the payment of his troops.

(4) The parganas in Malwa which had fallen into Sindhia's hand after the battle of Indore were to be restored to Holkar. The parganas of Sindhia were to be restored to him by Holkar.

(5) The territories in Hindustan (North India) which Sindhia had held for a considerable time and then had appropriated to himself permanently were to be disposed of according to the original agreement for a threefold division. This proposition alluded to an agreement made in the time of Mahadji Sindhia by which a third of his conquests in Hindustan was to be given to the Peshwa, a third to Tukoji Holkar and the remainder was to be held by himself.

(6) The Peshwa would give no assistance to Rajput States.

(7) The fort of Ahmadnagar was to be restored to Holkar.

(8) An adjustment should take place in such a way that no retribution should be required for the past.¹⁰²

99. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, pp. 62, 75; Martin, Wellesley's Despatches, Vol. II, p. 76.

100. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p. 62.

101. Ibid.

102. Ibid.

The Peshwa could hardly forget the bitterness of his humiliation at Hadapsar. He wrote to Amrit Rao, "Jaswant is a rank rascal, you must desert his company and come to me at once. Do not offer any excuses."¹⁰³ He did not want to do anything which might cause annoyance to his old friend Sindhia. As such he considered the propositions of Jaswant to be 'defounded and extravagant'.¹⁰⁴ The Peshwa sent the following reply to Holkar's demands.¹⁰⁵

(1) The Peshwa possessed full particulars for making a large demand against Holkar for desolating and laying waste his territories. Hence, the payment of a crore of rupees to Holkar should not arise.

(2) If the Peshwa had given a fortress to Sindhia, it did not mean that he should give another fortress to someone else.

(3) Kashi Rao, being the eldest son of Tukoji Holkar had been nominated by his father as his heir. The khilat of investiture from the Poona Government had been presented to him during the life of his father. As Kashi Rao's conduct had at all times been good, there existed no ground for depriving him of his inheritance.

(4) Khande Rao would probably be adopted by Kashi Rao who had no children. He would, therefore, in course of time be put in a position so that he might inherit all the possessions of his ancestors.¹⁰⁶

It is interesting at this stage to take a note of the Governor General's views regarding Jaswant Rao's demands. To him most of Jaswant's propositions seemed utterly inadmissible as the rights of

103. Sardesai, New History of the Marathas, Vol. III, p.385.

104. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p.75.

105. Ibid., p.74.

106. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p.74.

Kashi Rao were founded on the most indisputable grounds. Still he was of the opinion that every assurance should be given to Jaswant Rao Holkar that the utmost influence of the British Government would be exerted 'to effect an accommodation between Holkar and Sindhia.'¹⁰⁷ He wanted Close to persuade Baji Rao II to pay Jaswant a considerable sum of money on the condition of his withdrawing immediately from Poona. Since the Peshwa did not have money the Government of Bombay might be authorized to give him a loan for that purpose.¹⁰⁸ The Peshwa, on his part, was reluctant to offer any concession to Holkar 'whom he considered to be a rebel against the legitimate authority of the sovereign power of Mahratta Empire.'¹⁰⁹

3. The failure of the New Regime.

When Jaswant Rao, in reply to a letter from the Government of Bombay, expressed his desire to support the 'authority and commands' of the Peshwa, it was obvious that the 'New Regime' was coming to an end.¹¹⁰

Things had not been going well for Jaswant Rao Holkar at Poona. His financial difficulties had increased with increase in his forces.¹¹¹ His main problem was that he had no assured income. The army was long in arrears. In November 1802, the troops of Mir Khan and Shahmat Khan became mutinous.¹¹² Jaswant had to urge Shahmat Khan to proceed to Konkan for subsistence.¹¹³ The cavalry of Shahmat Khan

107. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p.79.

108. Ibid., p.80.

109. Martin, Wellesley's Despatches, Vol. III, p.76.

110. Forrest, Selections from State Papers, pp.589-590.

111. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. IX, p.140, Letter of Close to John Malcolm at Calcutta, 23rd January, 1803.

112. Forrest, Selections from State Papers, p.565.

113. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p.45.

became so desperate that they plundered a detachment of paga cavalry belonging to Holkar, who were on their way to join him from Chandor. Fateh Singh Mane, who was sent to Satara, carried on depredations near Kolhapur. Once he declined to comply with Jaswant's order for him to return.¹¹⁴

Jaswant Rao's early restraint did not last long. He pressed upon Amrit Rao his claim for one krore of rupees¹¹⁵ for having put him in power at Poona. Amrit Rao had no funds and felt much embarrassed by Holkar's constant impertunities.¹¹⁶ He proposed to Holkar that vakils should be sent to Hyderabad, Nagpur and Baroda for payment of arrears lying unrealised under different heads.¹¹⁷ Accordingly, Jaswant made a plan for sending his troops to Baroda to enforce the payment of twenty lakhs of rupees from the Gaskwad as his dues for the suba of Ahmedabad.¹¹⁸ The plan never materialised. Later on, in January 1803, Baba Phadkia made a fantastic suggestion. He proposed to proceed himself to the Durbar of Nizam for the purpose of procuring cash for Jaswant.¹¹⁹ Probably, he wanted to leave Poona and wanted to use it as a pretext.¹²⁰ Meanwhile, one Mirza Mahiuddin Beg, with 50 troopers, had come to seek service with Jaswant. He told Jaswant Rao that he had full knowledge of the treasures of 'the realm of Tipu Sultan' and if Jaswant would send a force with him nearly five krores of huns could easily be secured.

114. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p.72.

115. Ibid., p.60; Malcolm, Memoirs of Central India, Vol. I, p.231.

116. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p.72; Owen, A Selection of Wellesley's Despatches, p.222.

117. Ibid.

118. Papers re Mahratta War, 1803, p.376.

119. Bombay Political Secret Proceedings, 1803 (11th January), p.269.

120. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p.61.

On hearing this, Jaswant conferred on him the khilat of a Subedar and sent him to Mir Khan.¹²¹ All these plans of Jaswant show how acute his financial distress was. Getting nothing out of them Holkar put all blame on Amrit Rao. Lord Wellesley wrote to the Secret Committee of the Court of Directors, ".... Dissensions have arisen between Amrit Rao and Jaswant which may be expected to produce a separation of interests between those chieftains."¹²²

When expectations of money from different sources such as the kiladar of Lohgarh and Baba Phadkia had failed, it was decided to raise the requisite sum by fresh taxation, special levies and contributions.¹²³ The charge of collecting money was entrusted to the officials of the city under the control of Hari Pant Bhawe and Vithal Harinath who were more wicked than even Sharza Rao Ghatge.¹²⁴ They committed untold atrocities. The Pathans of Mir Khan dug up the floors of the houses in search of valuables.¹²⁵ Silver and gold vessels, clothes and furniture - practically every thing was carried away by them. Even the riding canopy of the Peshwa's elephant did not escape their eyes.¹²⁶ Cows considered to be 'sacred animals' were frequently slaughtered.¹²⁷ Several big houses, including the Peshwa's own palace, Shanwar Wada, were pulled down.¹²⁸ Unheard of atrocities were committed on people who were believed to be wealthy. Many committed suicide. Vireshwar Bhat and

121. Waqai-Holkar, f. 113b.

122. Martin, Wellesley's Despatches, Vol. II, p.222.

123. Papers re Mahratta War, 1803, p.359.

124. Marathi Riyasat, p.216; Bengal Secret Political Consultations, 1803, 21st February (80); Duff, Vol. II, p.224; Asiatic Annual Register, 1804, p.91.

125. Marathi Riyasat, p.227.

126. Sardesai, New History of the Marathas, Vol. III, p.386.

127. Valentia, Voyages and Travels, Vol. II, p.115.

128. D.B. Parasnis, Poona in Bygone Days, p.91.

Jivaji Pant Nene were beaten to death.¹²⁹ This plunder of the city by Holkar's troops, as cruel as that of Ghatge, continued for three months.¹³⁰ Poona looked like the abode of the god of death.¹³¹ In spite of this great violence committed at Poona, not more than 50 lakhs of rupees could be collected.¹³² "The proceedings of Holkar", wrote Lord Wellesley to the Secret Committee of Directors, appears to have excited universal disgust."¹³³ Imitating Jaswant's action at Poona, the Berads, the Bhils, the Ramusis, the Kolis and the Pindaris began their traditional depredations in different parts of Maharashtra.¹³⁴

One of the important causes of the failure of the New Regime was that Jaswant Rao failed to seat some one in the place of Bajji Rao II.¹³⁵ Jaswant wanted that the Chhatrapati Raja of Satara should give the robes of investiture to Vinayak Rao. For that purpose he wanted to go to Satara himself. He fell ill about the middle of December and therefore sent Fateh Singh Mane to Satara.¹³⁶ The Raja at first refused; but when Fateh Singh moved up his artillery, he granted the robes of investiture on the 22nd December.¹³⁷ Then there was the problem of the adoption ceremony without which the installation could not take place. It was proposed to give Vinayak Rao in adoption to Yashoda Bai and to rename him as Balaji Madhav Rao. But the troops which were sent to bring Yashoda Bai from Raigarh to Poona had no success.¹³⁸ The garrison of the Raigarh fort were

129. Khare, XIV, 6507, 7643-7646; Marathi Riyasat, p.227.

130. D.B. Parasnis, Poona in Bygone Days, p.91.

131. Sardesai, New History of the Marathas, Vol. III, p.386.

132. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p.XV.

133. Martin, Wellesley's Despatches, Vol. II, p.228.

134. Sardesai, New History of the Marathas, Vol. III, p.386.

135. Khare, XIV, 6525.

136. Khare, XIV, 6526, 6527, 6530; Papers re Mahratta War, 1803, p.379.

137. Riyasat, P.119; Forrest, Selections from State Papers, p.589.

138. Riyasat, p.118.

extremely loyal to Bajji Rao II. On January 5, 1803, Vinayak Rao's adoption and installation were postponed sine die.¹³⁹

Another cause of failure was the absence of a satisfactory settlement between Holkar and Sindhia. The progress of negotiations between them was very slow and not very fruitful either.¹⁴⁰ Close wrote to John Malcolm at Calcutta on the 23rd January, 1803, "Holkar's difficulties necessarily increase with the course of time and although Ambaji Ingle continues to correspond with him, it is not probable that there will soon be any decided result from the intercourse."¹⁴¹ Holkar's letters remained long unanswered by Sindhia. Sharza Rao Ghatge bragged of putting down Jaswant Rao and the Peshwa constantly wrote to Sindhia not to come to terms with Holkar.¹⁴² Jaswant was greatly disappointed to find Gopal Rao Chitnis, Sindhia's officer at Burhanpur, leading forces into his territories in Khandesh when negotiations for reconciliation and accommodation were going on.¹⁴³ Not much help was expected from other Maratha agirdars. The Vinchor agirdars did not move when invited to Poona. The Patwardhans prayed to be excused for their inability to come to Poona.¹⁴⁴

It was quite clear to Jaswant Rao Holkar that a united front against the Company's power could not be raised without the active support and co-operation of Sindhia.¹⁴⁵ He was, meanwhile, asked ^{by} Lord Wellesley to refrain from any opposition to the arrangements which were being made for the restoration of the Peshwa to Poona.¹⁴⁶ Jaswant

139. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p.XIV.

140. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p.77.

141. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. IX, p.140.

142. Papers re Mahratta War, 1803, p.97.

143. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p. XVI.

144. Forrest, Selections from State Papers, pp.589-590

145. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p.81.

146. Ibid., p.77.

Rao, therefore, left Poona on the 25th February, 1803,¹⁴⁷ entrusting the city to the charge of his faithful officer Harnath Singh. He himself took the road to Hyderabad and Ahmednagar. On the 26th February, he was encamped near Loni on the road to Hyderabad. He gave out that after the festival of Holi, he would proceed to Jejuri to pay his devotions and then would move on to the village of Siddu Take which belonged to Baba Phadkia and was about 60 miles from Poona.¹⁴⁸ According to Close, Jaswant had chosen that conveniently situated position in order to watch the movements of Col. Stevenson and at the same time to keep in touch with the various divisions of his army which were levying contributions from the southern jagirdars.¹⁴⁹ Another reason could be his anxiety to avoid the risk of war with the combined armies of the British, the Nizam and the Peshwa. A third probable reason was, as pointed out by Close, that from this vantage he could pursue with greater vigour his negotiations with Sindhia, or could launch an offensive against him in the event of the failure of these negotiations.

The period of Jaswant Rao Holkar's ascendancy was too short a one for him to attempt the organisation of any kind of government for Poona or for Maharashtra. From the economic point of view, the 'New Regime' of Jaswant Rao, had no stable basis. Besides, he failed to find a generally acceptable substitute for Baji Rao II; he could not win over the English to his side; and he also failed to make up his affairs with Sindhia. The New Regime, therefore, was by its very nature uncertain. But Jaswant alone should not be singled out for

147. Asiatic Annual Register, 1804, p.117; Owen, A Selection of Wellesley's Despatches, p.228.

148. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. VII, Letter of Close to Lt. General James Stuart (2nd March, 1803); Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p.152.

149. Ibid.

condemnation. The Peshwa and Sindhia were equally obstinate and forgetful of the interests of the country - and their all-devouring jealousy of Holkar blinded them to all consequences. After a survey of conditions in the New Regime of Jaswant Rao Holkar, it is to be admitted that in spite of great difficulties, his approach to various problems was characterised by a short-sighted opportunism, and lack of political vision and fine moral feeling. Instead of creating an atmosphere of hope and stability, Jaswant Rao heaped upon terrible misery upon the fair city and its neighbourhood. As Lord Wellesley wrote, "The power of Jeswunt Row Holkar possessed no solid foundation in the justice of his cause, in popular opinion, or in the extent of political or military resource."¹⁵⁰ The New Regime of Jaswant Rao Holkar at Poona was merely a flimsy tissue of statecraft.

150. Owen, A Selection of Wellesley's Despatches, p.214; Letter of Lord Wellesley to Court of Directors, December 24, 1802.

CHAPTER VIII

The Break-up of the Maratha Confederacy.

1. Jaswant Rao's activities on eve of the Peshwa's restoration to Poona.

It was no good omen for the Maratha Confederacy when Jaswant Rao Holkar and Daulat Rao Sindhia were higgling about terms which could bring them together and Lord Wellesley was pursuing his plans with great determination for the restoration of the Peshwa to Poona.¹ Lord Wellesley made a timely proclamation to get the support of the people of Maharashtra for the British cause and at the same time pushed on with the work of military preparation to achieve that object.² The sphere north of the Narmada was entrusted to Lord Lake while Major General Wellesley was to operate in the South. The Nizam's subsidiary force was kept ready at Parenda under Colonel Stevenson; the Madras army was organized under General Stuart and the Bombay army under Colonel Murray. The British forces totalled about sixty thousand. Detailed notes regarding duties in emergency were sent by Lord Wellesley to all his military and civil officers. One Major Firth was specially appointed to seduce officers of the Maratha chiefs. Such officers were promised not only their present emoluments but 'proper respect and attention without any distinction being made on racial grounds.'³ In order to effect the restoration of the Peshwa to Poona peacefully, Lord Wellesley requested Amrit Rao to withdraw from Poona,⁴ assuring him that the Governor-General would get all his grievances redressed by the Peshwa. Jaswant Rao Holkar

1. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p.81.

2. Khare, XIV, 7489; Asiatic Annual Register, 1804, p.103.

3. Sardesai, New History of the Marathas, Vol. III, pp.388-389.

4. Ibid., p.385.

was told that no harm would be done to him if he would not interfere with British arrangements for the restoration of the Peshwa.⁵ Holkar had lost all interest in Amrit Rao⁶ because he had failed to satisfy the former's demands. Besides, Jaswant Rao thought that it was not possible to oppose the restoration of the Peshwa single-handed, without the active support and co-operation of Sindhia and Bhosle. In such circumstances, Holkar, whose financial distress was acute,⁷ wanted to spend his timely wisely in a predatory campaign.

He left Poona on the 25th February, 1803,⁸ and took the road to Hyderabad and Ahmednagar⁹ to maintain his huge army by plundering.¹⁰ He left a small corps at Poona under Harnath Singh. Harnath began to raise money from the inhabitants who remained in the city and dug the floors of the houses of those who had run away.¹¹

Jaswant Rao carried his depredations far and near. How grievously people suffered from them may be realised from the description given of them by Arthur Wellesley in his letter to the Governor General on April 21, 1803 - "They have not left a stick standing at the distance of 150 miles from Poona. They have eaten the forage and grain and have pulled down the houses. The inhabitants are fled with their cattle. Excepting in one village, I have not seen a human creature since I quitted the neighbourhood of Miraj....."¹²

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5. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p.80.
 6. Martin, Wellesley's Despatches, Vol. II, p.222.
 7. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p.45.
 8. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. VII, Letter of Close to Lt. General James Stuart, C-in-C of the Army (2nd March, 1803); Asiatic Annual Register, 1804, p.117. According to Dr. P.C. Gupta, Holkar left Poona in March, 1803. (Baji Rao II and the Company, p.47).
 9. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. IX, p.152.
 10. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p.96.
 11. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. IX, p.152.
 12. Gurwood, Wellington's Despatches, Vol. I, p.508.

The same grim and dismal picture is to be found in the letter of the Deputy Adjutant General of the Subsidiary force to Colonel Stevenson on the 26th May, 1803 - "Most of the villages in our route were deserted and the inhabitants that appeared had been stripped of everything. The town of Seddatake was passed by the Subsidiary force on the 24th April and found to have been completely pillaged. Three men only were in it; and they reported that the place had been plundered by Holkar's troops some months before; and that they had been nearly starved in consequence of their not having even left them grain to subsist on."¹³ On the 30th March, 1803, Jaswant Rao encamped at 'Rujapore'.¹⁴ He exacted about four lakhs from the town and another one nearby named Hasub-kera, both belonging to the Nizam.¹⁵ At that very time Jaswant ordered his other commanders, operating elsewhere, 'to join him with all possible speed, earnestly entreating them not to allow any subordinate object to divert their attention or impede their march.'¹⁶ It was presumed that Jaswant Rao was proceeding to Ahmadnagar, having received proposals from the killedar for delivering up the place,¹⁷ and that his other object was to lodge his family and heavy equipment at Chandore.¹⁸ In the meantime Jaswant realized a contribution of ten lakhs of rupees from the city of Aurangabad,¹⁹ and rewarded his lieutenants. Shaikh Ibadulla

13. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. VII, p.83.

14. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. IX, p.172. The place was Vijaypur.

15. Ibid., p.188.

16. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p.93.

17. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. VII, p.55.

18. Ibid., p.63.

19. Basawan Lal, Tr., p.185. In Poona Residency Correspondence, it is stated that the officer commanding on the part of Nizam gave adequate security to Holkar for the payment of 11 lakhs of rupees to save the place from being plundered. (Vol. IX, p.188.)

was appointed as the 'Colonel of the Campoo that had forty guns.'²⁰ Wahid Ali Khan was given one lakh of rupees as inam and was also raised to the rank of a Subadar.²¹ Thereafter, Jaswant marched to Chandor.²²

Meanwhile, Mir Khan had been operating in another region. According to Bagawan Lal, he had left Poona with a force of eighty thousand horse and foot. He had with him Shahamat Khan, Nagoji Pant, Fateh Singh Mane, Inam Baksh and Qadir Baksh Pindaras, Ghorpura Mankuree (a Risaldar of four thousand horse), Fateh Singh Nigari, Ahmad Khan of Kripa Kanor and Muhammad Shah Khan. Mir Khan had taken the road to Miraj and Mangalheera.²³ Baramati afforded him a rich booty. Singhola surrendered after a vigorous fight of six hours. Mangalheera, a well-fortified place, resisted Mir Khan's attack for a whole day and then surrendered. Two detachments of Mir Khan's army, sent under Mahibullah Khan and Rahim Beg, collected tribute from Akil kot and returned to Mangalheera.²⁴ Mir Khan continued his march towards Aurangabad. On the way he placed Fateh Singh Mane under surveillance.²⁵ Fateh Singh had been thinking of going over to the side of Bajji Rao II²⁶ and had sent off his property to Satara for that purpose.²⁷ On the way to Aurangabad Mir Khan plundered a few villages on the borders of Solapore. He sent a message to the Polligar that he would lay waste the country with fire and sword unless five lakhs of rupees were paid to him.²⁸ He moved on to Pandharpur, while

20. Waqai-Holkar, f. 114b.

21. Ibid., f. 115a.

22. Bagawan Lal, Tr., p. 186.

23. Ibid., pp. 182-183.

24. Bagawan Lal, Tr., p. 183.

25. Khare, XIV, 7667; Waqai-Holkar, f. 114b.

26. Bagawan Lal, Tr., p. 185.

27. Waqai-Holkar, f. 114b.

28. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. VII, p. 69.

Shahamat Khan began to plunder Pangaon.²⁹ In March, 1803, Mushir-ul-Mulk, the minister of the Nizam, wrote to Major General Wellesley about the necessity of winning over Mir Khan to the British side.³⁰ He sent one Ghulam Khan to ascertain the views of Mir Khan. Major General Wellesley believed that Mir Khan was genuinely interested in the offer of Mushir-ul-Mulk.³¹ Basawan Lal, however, maintains that Mir Khan pretended 'to give ear to the proposal' because it was convenient to him in many respects.³² Mir Khan sent his agent Rahim Beg to Nizam's camp and soon came the most tempting offer of "Hoondees for sixty lakhs of rupees, a jaidad of 18 lakhs within the Nizam's own territory, besides the promised crore of revenue hereafter."³³ Mir Khan replied that it would be unbecoming on his part to settle the matter without consulting his master and then marched away to Phoolthumba. Leaving his army there and lightly equipped he continued his journey to Chandor.³⁴ On reaching the place he told Jaswant Rao the details of negotiations between himself and Mushir-ul-Mulk and assured him in these words - "You may rest satisfied, although the sovereignty of the whole world was offered to me, as the condition of my separating from the cause to which I am pledged, still would I spurn the offer."³⁵ Thus while the restoration of Bajji Rao II was taking place at Poona, Jaswant Rao remained at Chandor³⁶ watching the developments and biding his time.³⁷

29. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. VII, p.69.

30. Basawan Lal, Tr., p.186.

31. Gurwood, Wellington's Despatches, Vol. I, p.496.

32. Basawan Lal, Tr., p.186.

33. Ibid., pp.188-189.

34. Ibid., p.189; In Poona Residency Correspondence it is recorded that Mir Khan joined Holkar in the vicinity of Aurangabad on the 27th April, 1803 (Vol. IX, p.191).

35. Basawan Lal, Tr., p.189.

36. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p.94 - "Holkar himself is near Chandore, about 300 miles from Poona and the officers and troops in his service have all followed in that same direction." (Letter of Arthur Wellesley to the Adjutant General of the Army, April 15, 1803.)

37. Sardesai, New History of the Marathas, Vol. III, p.390.

2. Sindhia-Holkar negotiations before the Peshwa's restoration to Poona.

Jaswant Rao Holkar was the first of the Maratha confederates to suggest the formation of a Maratha coalition against the British. On January 2, 1803, he told Amrit Rao and others, "....I will despatch a letter (to Sindhia) reporting what has happened and added 'should the English uniting with Bajji Rao ascend, Sindhia and I should accommodate our differences and jointly oppose the British troops.'"³⁸ The Maratha confederacy stretching from the Tungabhadra in the South to Patiala in the North was superior to any other power in India. Its resources in men and money were great. Lord Wellesley knowing both the strength and weakness of the Maratha State considered it 'obviously prudent to employ every endeavour to effect such an arrangement as should preclude the union of the Maratha States under any circumstances.'³⁹ He was aware of the fact that the Maratha State, unconnected with any European ally, could never become formidable to the British except of course, in the event of an actual union of the feudal chiefs under an efficient leader wielding sovereign power.⁴⁰ This union of the Maratha chiefs depended to a large extent on the satisfactory solution of Sindhia-Holkar dispute. It never materialised due to the obstinacy of one party and the impatience of the other.

It was well known that Jaswant Rao Holkar and Daulat Rao Sindhia did not trust each other.⁴¹ While negotiations were going on between

38. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p. XVI.

39. Martin, Wellesley's Despatches, Vol. III, p. XXX; Asiatic Annual Register, 1804, p. 91.

40. Martin, Wellesley's Despatches, Vol. III, p. 107.

41. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. VII, p. 65.

them, Jaswant secretly presented the Widows of Mahadji Sindhia five lakhs of rupees and five elephants which he had got from Amrit Rao.⁴² Both Holkar and Sindhia were trying to come to an accommodation through the mediation of Ambaji Ingle⁴³ and Raghuji Bhosle.⁴⁴ On the 1st March 1803, Holkar sent to Sindhia's darbar two karkoons named Vitthal Pant and Sham Rao.⁴⁵ His demands were that Sindhia should give an explanation for Malhar Rao II's murder; accept Jaswant Rao as the Diwan with full authority to manage the Holkar government, release Khande Rao and restore to him the money which Sindhia had collected from Holkar territory.⁴⁶ Daulat Rao Sindhia was in a mood of compromise. The partisans of Amrit Rao and Jaswant Rao Holkar took great pains to impress upon him the fact that the Treaty of Bassein contained an article stipulating that the English, the Peshwa and the Nizam should compel Daulat Rao Sindhia to discharge all Frenchmen in his service.⁴⁷ Sindhia lacked sincerity. It is to be noted that Jaswant Rao Ghoreparey and Naguji Gundoo, who had been sent by Ambaji Ingle to Jaswant Rao in the middle of March, 1803, were not deputed for the purpose of any negotiation but merely to ascertain the temper of Holkar and the strength of his army.⁴⁸ Daulat Rao no doubt released Khande Rao and

42. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p.86.

43. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. IX, p.151.

44. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. VII, p.65.

45. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. IX, p.151. In this volume, on page 154, Vitthal Pant is written as Vithaji Ingle, a relative of Ambaji Ingle.

46. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. VII, p.53, Letter of Close to the Governor General, 12th March, 1803.

47. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. VII, p.67.

48. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p.85.

the daughter of Jaswant Rao, treated them with distinction, and promised to send them to Jaswant at an early date.⁴⁹ Holkar had also hopes that Sindhia would soon release his lost territory but this did not happen.⁵⁰ Daulat Rao explained to Vitthal Pant that Holkar's demand for half of the conquests made by their predecessors in North India was unjustified when both Mahadji Sindhia and Tukeji Holkar had passed away. If at all Jaswant must have a share, he must pay the expenses with accumulated interest incurred in making the conquests. Besides this, as Jaswant had plundered and laid waste the greater part of this territory, he should make good the loss to Sindhia by ceding half of this territory to him.⁵¹ It is indeed a tragedy that even a general sense of danger could not induce the Maratha chieftains to reconcile their interests. Jaswant Rao Holkar received nothing but false assurances from Daulat Rao Sindhia as also from Raghuji Bhosle.⁵²

Sindhia was playing his characteristic waiting game. His avoidable delays in negotiations with Holkar clearly indicate that he had no intention of obstructing Baji Rao II's restoration to Poona. Sindhia received a copy of the Treaty of Bassein from Close on the 9th January, 1803, at Burhanpur⁵³ where he had encamped with 3000 horse and three brigades of infantry amounting each to about 5000 men.⁵⁴ Close invited Daulat Rao to join the British against the enemies of Baji Rao II. Sindhia replied that he would communicate his answer after sometime.⁵⁵ Lord Wellesley, strange as it may

49. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. IX, p. 172.

50. Holkarshahichya Itihasanchi Sadhane, Vol. II, p. 45.

51. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. VII, p. 70.

52. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p. 184.

53. Sardesai, New History of the Marathas, Vol. III, p. 395.

54. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p. 86.

55. Sardesai, New History of the Marathas, Vol. III, p. 395.

appear, thought that it was Sindhia's wish 'to improve friendship subsisting between the Peshwa, the English and his own state.'⁵⁶ He decided to send Resident Colonel Collins from Fatehgarh to Sindhia's camp. Collins, whom General Wellesley described as a little monkey dressed for Bartholmew Fair, was a man of unquestioned ability but at the same time was pompous, bold, formal, frank and impatient. He arrived in Sindhia's camp on the 27th February but had his first meeting with Sindhia on the 11th March. From the very beginning he wanted to have a positive declaration of friendship from Sindhia. Collins offered him a subsidiary treaty and also offered to arbitrate between him and Holkar.⁵⁷ Sindhia's reply was evasive. He said, "We must have a little time to think on this subject, as regards our dispute with Holkar, we do not stand in need of British mediation."⁵⁸ On the 16th March, Sindhia's yakil informed Collins that Sindhia had every desire to maintain peace and friendship with the British Government, but he would like to consult the Peshwa regarding his dispute with Holkar.⁵⁹ Sindhia's yakil added that it was wrong on the part of the British to have concluded the Treaty of Bassein with the Peshwa without reference to Sindhia. He based the statement on the argument that in the Treaty of Salbai, Sindhia had been accepted as guarantee for the due execution of engagements between the Peshwa and the British. Disappointed Collins' reply was sarcastic - "Do you maintain that a master must seek his servant's permission to act as he likes?"⁶⁰

56. Martin, Wellesley's Despatches, Vol. III, p. 74.

57. Owen, A Selection of Wellesley's Despatches, pp. 224-225.

58. Sardesai, New History of the Marathas, Vol. III, p. 396.

59. Martin, Wellesley's Despatches, Vol. III, p. 74.

60. Sardesai, New History of the Marathas, Vol. III, p. 396.

3. Restoration of the Peshwa to Poona.

Lord Wellesley's plan was to bring the Peshwa to Poona at the end of April, 1803. Arthur Wellesley received instructions from General Stuart, on the 9th March,⁶¹ to proceed to Poona to prepare the ground for the return of the Peshwa.⁶² He was instructed to encourage the southern jagirdars to declare in favour of the Peshwa and to form a junction with the subsidiary force under Colonel Stevenson. Major General Wellesley crossed the Tungabhadra on the 12th March⁶³ with about eight thousand infantry and seventeen hundred cavalry. Colonel Stevenson brought with him the Hyderabad Subsidiary force which had about the same number of British troops. Fifteen thousand Nizam's native troops accompanied this division.⁶⁴ Major General Wellesley moved towards Poona unopposed. On March 13, 1803, he wrote from his camp at Karigy to the Governor General - "I hear nothing of any of Holkar's troops and I do not know that we have an enemy in the country."⁶⁵ He was joined on the bank of Krishna by a number of powerful Maratha chiefs as Appa Saheb Patwardhan, Bapu Gokhale, Bapu Vithal and the yakil of the Kuttur Raja.⁶⁶ The conduct and discipline of Wellesley's troops were excellent and created a favourable impression. They were well received by the inhabitants of the country.⁶⁷ Malcolm, who accompanied General Wellesley on his march to Poona, wrote to Lord Clive, "The march of a British force through this distracted country has

61. Papers re Mahratta War, 1803, p.93.

62. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p.83; Martin, Wellesley's Despatches, Vol III, p.80; Asiatic Annual Register, 1804, p.103.

63. Martin, Wellesley's Despatches, Vol. I, p.118.

64. Basawan Lal, Tr., p.183. Basawan Lal is, however, wrong in stating that Major General Wellesley advanced from Bassein with a force of twenty-two battalions.

65. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p.85.

66. Papers re Mahratta War, 1803, p.116.

67. Martin, Wellesley's Dispatches, Vol. I, p.118.

had the happy effect of reconciling its contending chiefs and of giving confidence to its oppressed inhabitants."⁶⁸

After Harnath Singh's departure from Poona, the city had fallen to the charge of Amrit Rao. He too began to dig up the floors of the houses for treasure and plundered the people without mercy.⁶⁹ Close learnt through different sources that Jaswant Rao Holkar had written to Amrit Rao to watch the approach of British forces and when they came near Poona to set fire to the city and retire in all haste towards the Godavari.⁷⁰ When Arthur Wellesley was about 60 miles from Poona, he heard such a rumour.⁷¹ So he made a hurried march, and covering 60 miles in 32 hours,⁷² reached Poona in the afternoon of the 20th April.⁷³ Amrit Rao left Poona for Juner in the morning of the 20th April.⁷⁴ Before leaving the city, he made a request to Close to secure for him a suitable pension.⁷⁵ According to Dr. P.C. Gupta,⁷⁶ the story of Amrit Rao's intention to burn the city lacks truth. Colonel Welsh of the Madras establishment, who accompanied Major General Wellesley, wrote that the confidence with which people behaved 'seemed to give a flat contradiction to the report which had induced the General to a forced march.'⁷⁷ It is to be remembered, however, that not only Arthur Wellesley but Close too had heard from a reliable source that Amrit Rao had intended to burn the city

68. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p.90.

69. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. VII, p.72.

70. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p.93.

71. Bengal Secret Political Consultations, 1803, 22nd June (43); Papers re Mahratta War, 1803, p.118.

72. Duff, Vol. II, p.230.

73. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p.95, Letter of Arthur Wellesley to the Governor General, April 21, 1803.

74. Papers re Mahratta War, 1803, p.118; Mill, History of British India, Vol. VI, pp.293-294.

75. Bengal Secret Political Consultations, 1803, 22nd June (43).

76. Gupta, Bajji Rao II and the Company, p.49.

77. Welsh, Military Reminiscences, Vol. I, p.152.

and that it was saved only by the timely arrival of British forces.⁷⁸

The restoration of the Peshwa was largely due to the consummate planning and skilful execution of it by Major General Wellesley.⁷⁹ Bajji Rao II ascended the Bore Ghat on the evening of the 5th May. He reached Talegaon on the night of the 6th and arrived at Chinchone near Poona on the 7th. On the 13th of May, declared a lucky day by the astrologers, the Peshwa, backed by British bayonets and accompanied by Chimnaji Appa and a large number of Maratha chiefs, entered Poona. In accordance with his wishes, the Governor of Bombay ordered a salute of 19 guns in Bombay, Baroda, Surat and other places.⁸⁰ At sunset of the 13th May, salutes were fired in honour of the Peshwa from hill-forts near Poona.⁸¹ Sindhia⁸² and Bhosle⁸³ were informed that the Governor General was resolved 'not to admit the slightest opposition on the part of any power to the execution of a treaty founded on the principles of undeniable justice, equity and moderation.' The Restoration of Peshwa Bajji Rao II to Poona under British Protection opened a new chapter in the history of the Marathas.

Immediately after the restoration of Bajji Rao II to Poona, Arthur Wellesley had to deal with the most urgent problem of a settlement with Amrit Rao.⁸⁴ It was necessary⁸⁵ to dissuade him at the earliest from joining a Maratha coalition against the British Government. After his departure from Poona, Amrit Rao stayed for

78. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, pp.93, 95; Duff, Vol. II, p.230.

79. Valentia, Voyages and Travels, Vol. II, p.144.

80. Khare, XIV, 7675; Forrest, Selections from State Papers, p.596.

81. Bengal Secret Political Proceedings, 1803 (22 June)(54).

82. Martin, Wellesley's Despatches, Vol. III, p.94.

83. Ibid., p.100.

84. Bombay Political Secret Proceedings, 1803, 27th May, p.3201.

85. Gurwood, Wellington's Despatches, Vol. I, p.546.

some time at Bokhare, came to Chakan,⁸⁶ plundered Nasik and then besieged the fort of Patta.⁸⁷ Towards the end of May, Amrit Rao wrote a letter to Arthur Wellesley expressing his desire to keep himself away from the Peshwa's enemies and accept whatever provision is made for him by the British Government.⁸⁸ Arthur Wellesley maintained a friendly correspondence with him to secure his neutrality and support in the impending contest.⁸⁹ Amrit Rao's yakil visited Arthur Wellesley on the 15th of June. He said that his master had received authentic information that Jaswant Rao Holkar had been asked by the Peshwa to seize Amrit Rao as the latter was in league with the English.⁹⁰ The yakil asked for General Wellesley's permission to allow his master to take shelter at the Sangam (Sanganner), or if that were not possible, in the English camp.⁹¹ The correspondence between Amrit Rao and Arthur Wellesley was referred to the Peshwa for his suggesting terms of a settlement. Baji Rao II reluctantly agreed to offer his brother territories with an income of four lakhs of rupees per annum, so long as he would continue to obey the government.⁹² Arthur Wellesley, who was in favour of making a lasting arrangement with Amrit Rao, assured him of British protection against the Peshwa or also other chiefs.⁹³ On the 14th August, 1803, a treaty was made with Amrit Rao's yakil. It was decided that Amrit Rao and Vinayak Rao would enjoy for life an income

86. Khare, XIV, 6630.

87. Ibid., 6637.

88. Gurwood, Wellington's Despatches, Vol. I, p.175.

89. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p.106.

90. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p.110, Letter of General Wellesley to Lt. Col. Close, June 15, 1803.

91. Gurwood, Wellington's Despatches, Vol. I, p.175.

92. Gupta, Baji Rao II and the Company, p.69.

93. Owen, A Selection of Wellington's Despatches, p.271.

of seven lakhs of rupees per annum, granted to them in territory or in cash. The British Government would guarantee the payment. The revenue of the districts then in the possession of Amrit Rao was to be included in the stipulated amount.⁹⁴ Amrit Rao's jagir of seven lakhs was increased later on by another lakh and his treaty with Arthur Wellesley was confirmed in the month of January, 1804, by the Governor General in Council.⁹⁵ Arthur Wellesley justified his action in a letter to Dundas. He wrote, "We considered it important to secure the neutrality and support of Amrit Rao in the impending contest....."⁹⁶ Sardesai holds that Amrit Rao proved the first traitor to the Maratha State by accepting a permanent provision from the British Government.⁹⁷ It is difficult not to conclude in the eventual perspective of history that it was Bajji Rao II, and not Amrit Rao, who proved the first traitor to the Maratha State.

4. Daulat Rao's attempt to form a coalition.

Jaswant Rao Holkar was at Chandor when the restoration of Bajji Rao II took place at Poona. According to Mohan Singh, he had gone there to chastise the revenue collector of the place for evading payment of contribution.⁹⁸ In early June, 1803, news came to Jaswant at Chandor that one of his commanders named Achhe Singh had seized the fort of Dhodap. He was highly pleased and himself marched to Dhodap. Achhe Singh presented to his master 'a nazar of Rs. 50,000, an elephant, a horse and other things' and in return received the title of Raja. He was ordered to march to the Konkan district.⁹⁹ While

94. Gurwood, Wellington's Despatches, Vol. I, p.311.

95. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. VII, p.194.

96. Owen, Wellington's Despatches, p.348.

97. Sardesai, New History of the Marathas, Vol. III, p.392.

98. Waqai-Holkar, f. 115a.

99. Ibid., f. 115b.

Achhey Singh was on the way to Nasik, Jaswant received the information that the Raja Bahadur of Malegaon had left for Trimbak and wrote to Achhey Singh to make a hurried march to that place with his troops. Achhe Singh captured and killed many men of the Raja Bahadur who were carrying with them valuable articles through the mountain paths to the fort of Trimbak. About two hundred horses and forty camels loaded with jewels and precious articles were captured. Jaswant left Achhe Singh at Trimbak to collect the revenue from that place and himself joined his army at Dhodap.¹⁰⁰ In the middle of June, Harnath Singh crossed the Tapti and levied two lakhs of rupees from Kuprel.¹⁰¹ About the same time Shahamat Khan and Nago Jiwaji were operating at Talmir on the southern bank of the Tapti.¹⁰² Mir Khan was in the vicinity of Jalna on the banks of the Girna river.¹⁰³ Jaswant Rao himself went to Kuprel and Talhuada, exacted 40,000 of rupees from Turkhera and then moved to Sendhwa and finally to Awan by way of Nagalbari. It was at Awan that letters were received by him from Daulat Rao Sindhia 'begging for peace.'¹⁰⁴ Sindhia wrote, "If we persist in maintaining our former mutual attitude it will only cause harm to our prosperity. It is, therefore, proper that we should be inclined to friendliness and never act contrary to each other's advise and directions."¹⁰⁵ According to Basawan Lal, Sindhia and Bhosle sent a Pundit to Jaswant with the following message, "....every true Maratha uniting in heart and hand, and in word and deed ought to endeavour to drive the English out of the country."¹⁰⁶

100. Wagai-Holkar, f. 116a.

101. In Poona Residency Correspondence, Kuprel is mentioned as Copoor (Vol. IX, p.272).

102. Wagai-Holkar, f. 116a.

103. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. IX, p.272.

104. Wagai-Holkar, f. 117a.

105. Ibid., f. 117b.

106. Basawan Lal, Tr., p.190.

The reason for this change in the attitude of Daulat Rao Sindhia was that he was called upon by Lord Wellesley to give his consent to the terms of the Treaty of Bassein. Colonel Collins, the Resident at Sindhia's camp, had been asked by the Governor General to put a definite limit within which Sindhia must take a decision.¹⁰⁷ The offer of Lord Wellesley to Sindhia meant either peace based 'upon terms of equality and honourable to all parties' or war.¹⁰⁸ Daulat Rao Sindhia and Raghuji Bhosle had their first formal meeting on the 4th June at Bodwad near Malkapur and on the 8th June they had their first consultations. Collins was constantly demanding from them their decision. On the 12th June, he gave them a written threat that he would leave Sindhia's camp if a definite reply was not immediately given. The threat was repeated on the 19th June. Sindhia who had promised to give a reply on the 28th, later informed Collins that he and Bhosle were not in a position to come to a final decision unless a full copy of the Treaty of Bassein was received.¹⁰⁹ The threats of Collins continued, and Sindhia fell nervous about his own security. While in this predicament he solicited the mediation of Raghuji Bhosle for bringing about an accommodation with Holkar and then form a strong Maratha coalition against the British.

Daulat Rao Sindhia was singled out by Lord Wellesley for the use of pressure tactics, because the Governor General was convinced

107. Asiatic Annual Register, 1804, p.144.

108. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p.121. The Governor General in Council reported to the Court of Directors on September 25, 1803, that Sindhia and Bhosle were annoyed because the restoration of Bajji Rao II to Poona deprived them of all hopes of realising their ambitions. (Owen, A Selection of Wellesley's Despatches, p.349.)

109. Owen, A Selection of Wellesley's Despatches, pp. 333-336; Sardesai, New History of the Marathas, Vol. III, pp.399-400.

that Sindhia alone possessed the means of offering any serious opposition to the British.¹¹⁰ Besides, as early as on the 7th June, 1799, Lord Wellesley had written to Dundas that for long it had been his ambition to destroy the French party at Sindhia's court.¹¹¹ The restoration of the Peshwa to Poona, thought the Governor General, provided him with an opportunity to achieve this long-cherished ambition either by making a Subsidiary Alliance or by going to war with Sindhia. Wellesley's communication to the Secret Committee shows that he did not consider Jaswant Rao a serious menace to the Company: "The situation of Holkar is precarious and accidental..... it deprives him of the means of opposing any systematic or formidable resistance to the operation of our alliance with the State of Poonah."¹¹² The position of Jaswant Rao Holkar at the time of the Peshwa's restoration to Poona was far from happy. Provisions were extremely dear in Holkar's camp. Grain was procurable only on those days when a little of it came to his camp; on the other days practically nothing could be had. It was difficult for him to pay his horsemen. The result was when they got a little cash they deserted.¹¹³ Holkar's position did not improve even next month. It was reported on the 6th July by a News-writer in Holkar's camp - "Holkar's troops are much dispirited. They can scarcely procure grain to subsist on, and they get no pay. Many therefore desert daily, and the talk in the camp is, if the English come, who will remain with Holkar to oppose them?" The weakness of his opponents gave the Governor General

110. Martin, Wellesley's Despatches, Vol. III, p.187.

111. Martin, Wellesley's Despatches, Vol. II, p.39.

112. Martin, Wellesley's Despatches, Vol. III, p.144.

113. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. IX, p.272, Translation of a letter from a news-writer in Holkar's camp, 18th June, 1803; Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. IX, p.109, Letter of Close to the Governor General, 25th June, 1803.

the necessary confidence. The differences between Holkar and Sindhia were so acute that they could never come together,¹¹⁴ and the Bhosle Raja of Nagpur possessed neither military skill nor sufficient resources to challenge the English alone or in unison with others.¹¹⁵

It was only in June, 1803, that there seemed some chance of a general coalition of the Maratha chiefs against the English.¹¹⁶ Jadu Rao Bhaskar, the prime minister of Sindhia, was deputed by his master to consult Raghuji for forming a common front.¹¹⁷ Sindhia and Bhosle exerted 'the whole resources of their ingenuity'¹¹⁸ to form a Maratha coalition. Sindhia had daily communications with the Peshwa¹¹⁹ who instigated him and Bhosle through Balavantrao Nagnath to put down the British.¹²⁰ Bajji Rao II had assured Close that he would not desert the side of the British, yet when he was pressed for supplying the stipulated quota of troops, he felt offended with the British.¹²¹ The Peshwa detested Holkar, but he had sympathy for other confederates. Daulat Rao and Raghuji made a successful appeal to powerful Maratha chiefs. Ramchandra Rao Appa told Bajji Rao II at the end of July, 1803, that he was as loyal a servant of the State as the late Parushuram had been, but under no circumstances would he serve under Arthur Wellesley.¹²² The Patwardhans, the Bastias and the Vinchurkar jagirdars refused to join the British army.¹²³ At the court of Baroda a conspiracy was afoot for the

114. Malcolm, Political History of India (1784-1823), Vol. I, p.254.

115. Martin, Wellesley's Despatches, Vol. III, p.187.

116. B. S. Jones, Papers relative to the progress of British power in India, p.7.

117. Duff, Vol. II, p.228.

118. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. IX, p.336, Letter of Close to Collins, 15th July, 1803.

119. Owen, A Selection of Wellesley's Despatches, pp.243-244.

120. Khare, XIV, 6655.

121. Ibid., 6656.

122. Ibid., 6666.

123. Khare, XIV, 6650.

overthrow of British influence in that state.¹²⁴ Sindhia instigated Gosavi Himmat Bahadur and Gani Beg in Bundelkhand to prepare for war against the British.¹²⁵ The court of Hyderabad also seemed a bit inclined to support the cause of the confederates.¹²⁶ Holkar alone stood aloof and Sindhia and Bhosle did not know how to make Holkar join the common cause. Early in July of 1803, there was a rumour that Holkar was proceeding to Gujarat.¹²⁷ At that time he was stationed at Vaghadi, 12 miles to the westward of the Tapti. Shahamat Khan and Nago Jivaji were encamped to the southward of the Tapti. Mir Khan's army was also on the southern bank of the river near Talner.¹²⁸ It appears that Jaswant Rao was willing to respond to the call of Daulat Rao Sindhia and Raghujji Bhosle. He wrote to his generals, "Maharajah Daulat Rao Sindhia is preparing for a war against the English, and has written to me offering apologies for the past and begging for peace and an alliance. It is, therefore, our most pressing duty to become his partner."¹²⁹ Mir Khan, however, warned his master to be on his guard against treachery as his enmity with Sindhia was of old standing. According to Basawan Lal, Jaswant Rao sent Khande Rao Mane to Sindhia and Bhosle with the following four demands¹³⁰:-

(1) Khande Rao^{II} and his mother, who were prisoners in Asirgarh, were to be released.

(2) All territories belonging to the Holkar family were to be restored.

124. Malet, Baroda State, p.23.

125. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. IX, p.280.

126. Wellesley, History of the events and transactions in India, p.36.

127. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p.109.

128. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. IX, Translation of a letter from a News-writer in Holkar's camp, dated 6th July, 1803.

129. Waqai-Holkar, f. 118a.

130. Basawan Lal, Tr., pp.191-192.

(3) Sindhia and Bhosle should choose one part of the field on the day the battle against the English would be fought, leaving the other part entirely to Jaswant Rao.

(4) All property, which had been seized when Jaswant was confined at Nagpur, should be restored to him.

In fact, the demands were larger in number and were made by Jaswant Rao at the most inappropriate time when the nation was threatened by a foreign power. Extravagant as they were, they included¹³¹:

(1) Khande Rao^{II} and his followers were to be given up.

(2) All territory in Desh, Malwa and Hindustan (north India), belonging to the Holkar family, should be restored.

(3) Kashi Rao Holkar was to be handed over to Jaswant Rao and whatever documents Daulat Rao might have taken from him must be returned.

(4) In the time of Tukoji Holkar and Ranoji Sindhia, a partition had been made of annual tribute paid by the 'Rajwada Rajas'. This partition was to be enforced.

(5) Khalsa lands had been taken from 'the King' and Rs. 4261587-7½ annas had been allowed for the expenses of the ^{Peshwa} Jaswant Rao demanded that he should have his share of lands and he would pay his share of the King's expenses.

(6) Mathura, including 'inam' lands, Gar Mukteshwar, Hapur and Khurja were to be given to Jaswant. The Khalsa and jaidad lands were also to be divided between Sindhia and Holkar.

(7) The 'Rohilla country' whose annual income was Rs. 11,23,782 - 13½ annas was to be divided between Sindhia and Holkar.

131. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. IX, pp. 321-324.

(8) Let 'countries to the amount of Rs. 11,06,039' remain in the share of the Peshwa, if not, they were to be divided between Sindhia and Holkar.

(9) The amount of jaidad assigned to different persons was stated to be Rs. 71,05,432 - 1½ annas. Of this sum part was actually in jaidad and part not. Jaswant should have share of that which was not in jaidad.

(10) There was some territory, yielding an annual revenue of Rs. 11,48,350- 10 annas, which was yet unallocated, and had been left to the share of the Peshwa. If it was not to remain with the Peshwa, Jaswant should have share in it.

(11) Jaswant was to have share in other 'countries' the extent and amount of revenue of which might have been concealed.

(12) Whatever 'countries' of the Peshwa were to be seized, this should be done with the consent of both Sindhia and Holkar.

(13) The affairs of Delhi were to be conducted by Sindhia and Holkar both.

(14) The amount of the revenue of those 'countries' which were to be divided, was to be exactly ascertained.¹³²

Daulat Rao Sindhia, in response to Holkar's demands, agreed to settle the differences through the mediation of Raghuji Bhosle. He was prepared to hand over Kashi Rao, Khande Rao, and their followers to Jaswant and even secure for Khande Rao the khilat of investiture from the Peshwa. In his reply he told Jaswant that the disputed territories must be ascertained by a reference to documents. The demands in which the Peshwa was involved, were to be settled

132. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. IX, pp. 321-324.

through the mediation of Raghuji Bhosle. Since the immediate settlement of certain territories was likely to lead to internal dissensions, no hasty steps were to be taken on this account.¹³³

In the afternoon of the 10th July,¹³⁴ Jaswant Rao took charge of Khande Rao who arrived accompanied by Shridhar Bapu, Kashiba and 4000 of Raghuji Bhosle's horse.¹³⁵ Jaswant, with all his troops, had advanced some distance to welcome Khande Rao.¹³⁶ Great rejoicings took place in his camp, salutes were fired in honour of Khande Rao.¹³⁷ Raghuji's ministers presented to Jaswant an order of delivery for all Holkar's territory. They requested Jaswant not to harbour any enmity towards Kashi Rao Holkar. They urged him to proceed towards Sindhia's encampment in order to confer with him and Raghuji Bhosle on the present state of affairs.¹³⁸ The situation, they said, was serious as Daulat Rao had received information that General Wellesley's assault on Ahmadnagar¹³⁹ was imminent. While negotiations in the Maratha Camp were proceeding at a slow pace, the English were going ahead with their plans. Early in July, 1803, Collins had asked Sindhia to move away from the frontier of the Nizam's dominions and at once to cross the Narmada. The Bhosle had similarly been asked to go back to Nagpur. On the 14th July, Daulat Rao received a letter from General Wellesley repeating this demand. Sindhia and Bhosle after sometime agreed to the proposal of Collins on the condition that General Wellesley must also return to his headquarters at Shrirangapattam.

133. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. IX, pp.321-324.

134. Sardesai, New History of the Marathas, Vol. III, p.405.

135. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. IX, p.325.

136. Wagai-Holkar, f.118a.

137. Ibid.

138. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. IX, p.325.

139. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p.121.

General Wellesley refused to do so, pointing out at the same time that while it would take nearly two months for him to reach his destination Sindhia would easily reach Burhanpur within two days.

On the 3rd August, Collins left Sindhia's camp and proceeded to Aurangabad. On the 6th August, Sindhia received a letter from General Wellesley¹⁴⁰ writing, "I offered you peace upon terms of equality and honourable to all parties. You have chosen war, and are responsible for all the consequences."¹⁴¹ Next day he issued a proclamation of war. Jaswant Rao Holkar still showed no disposition to join Sindhia and Bhosle against the British. He turned towards Burhanpur and encamped at Bhikangaon.¹⁴²

5. Holkar keeps away from the coalition.

Various explanations have been given for Holkar's not showing any 'disposition to fulfil his word'¹⁴³ and 'betraying' the confederates. According to the author of Waqai-Holkar, Jaswant Rao deserted the coalition as Sindhia neglected to accept his demands.¹⁴⁴ Holkar expressed his disappointment in a letter to Bhosle - "You know how during the last few months I have been begging you for the restoration of the Holkar's territories seized by Sindhia. As soon as he satisfies this request, I am ready to join you. I await your reply at Bhikangaon."¹⁴⁵ There is not much force in what Jaswant Rao wrote

140. Sardesai, New History of the Marathas, Vol. III, pp.400-401; Duff, Vol. II, p.229.

141. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p.121.

142. Waqai-Holkar, f.118b; Owen, A Selection of Wellesley's Despatches, p.338.

143. Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, p.324.

144. Waqai-Holkar, f. 118b.

145. Aitihasik Patravayabhar, p.373.

because Khande Rao had already been set free and Raghuji's ministers had presented to Jaswant an order from Sindhia releasing Holkar's territory.¹⁴⁶

Duff maintains that the confederates desired that Holkar should join them against the English, but he excused himself on the ground that if all were to be engaged in the Deccan who was to take care of Hindustan.¹⁴⁷ At another place the same author observes that Jaswant Rao concluded that in the event of success against the British power, Sindhia's first object after re-establishing his influence at Poona, would no doubt be a war of extermination against himself. "On the other hand if the tide should turn against the confederates, he imagined, after the power of Sindhia had been reduced to the level of his own, he might not only interpose with safety, but attain a consequence so much the greater, as it would be manifest, in the event of ultimate success, that it had mainly be depended on his exertions."¹⁴⁸ Malcolm points out that Jaswant wrote a long letter to Sindhia explaining his absence for want of money with which to pay his clamorous troops.¹⁴⁹ Pearse holds that Holkar was afraid of assisting Sindhia lest he should become the chief power in India.¹⁵⁰

In explaining the absence of Holkar from the coalition Sardesai attaches considerable importance to General Wellesley's letter to Holkar dated the 16th July, 1803. Wellesley wrote, " I am anxious to cultivate the good understanding which subsisted between the Company's Government and you. With this view I now send you a copy of the treaty concluded at Bassein between the Hon. Company and the Pandit Pradhan, from the general defensive terms of which you will

146. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. IX, p.325.

147. Duff, Vol. II, p.232.

148. Duff, Vol. II, pp.269-270.

149. Malcolm, Memoirs of Central India, Vol. I, p.232.

150. Pearse, Memoir of the Life and Military Services of Lake, p.261.

observe that the peace and security of India are provided for. You will also perceive that the 12th Article provides effectively for the security of all the great Maratha jagirdars among whom the Holkar family is particularly named. You will see that the interest and security of the family are connected with this treaty and that in fact they can be provided for in no other way. That being the case, I have little doubt that you will conduct yourself in the manner which your own interests will dictate and that you will continue in peace with the Company."¹⁵¹ It may be one of the factors, for while the sincerity of his own countrymen could not be relied upon, the foreigner was prepared to leave him in peace. It is to be noted that Jaswant Rao was never prepared to walk into the English camp straight away. When General Wellesley desired a visit, Jaswant cleverly avoided saying, "The visit can take place as things come to be shaped."¹⁵² Till the last General Wellesley could not be sure of Jaswant's real intentions. On the 15th of August, 1803, he wrote to Collins, "It is impossible for me to say that Holkar is not on his march to join those chiefs."¹⁵³

This non-committed attitude of Jaswant Rao Holkar made General Wellesley believe that Holkar's object perhaps was to keep himself out of the contest while urge others into it.¹⁵⁴ Collins also had the same idea. He thought that Holkar was encouraging Sindhia 'to pursue measures which would involve him in hostilities with the British Government - an event that might afford Jaswant Rao Holkar

151. Sardesai, New History of the Marathas, Vol. III, p.404.

152. Ibid., p.403 - 'जशा मेली व्यन्याच्या तशा घडतील'.

153. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p.127.

154. Owen, A Selection of Wellesley's Despatches, p.246.

the means of gratifying at once his enmity and ambition.¹⁵⁵ This surmise is at once contradicted by the two brief letters written by Jaswant to Bharmal Holkar. In one of them dated the 19th May, 1803, Jaswant wrote that he was ready to join the party of the Sardars in case they would show sincerity for the defence and protection of the Swarajya. In the letter, dated the 31st July, 1803, Jaswant Rao warned in clear terms: "Until our house is set on order, it is no use to stand against the foreigners."¹⁵⁶

The primary responsibility of the break-up of the Maratha Coalition rests on Daulat Rao Sindhia. On the eve of the Second Anglo-Maratha War Amrit Rao intercepted a letter written by Daulat Rao Sindhia to the Peshwa. Amrit Rao placed this letter in General Wellesley's hands, and the latter had it diverted to Jaswant Rao.¹⁵⁷ In that letter Sindhia wrote to the Peshwa, "Let us make a show of satisfying his demands. After the war is over, we shall both wreak our full vengeance upon him (Jaswant)."¹⁵⁸ This letter came as a bolt from the blue and revealed to Holkar the real motives of Sindhia. Still Jaswant wrote to Sindhia and Bhosle from Bhikangaon: "I am ready to join you in this business according to your letters. But you, inspite of all your promises and oaths, have a different intention and do not consider an alliance with me advisable. What will happen next will be the result of your choice."¹⁵⁹

The door was thus banged not by Jaswant Rao Holkar but by the other party and the penalty that the country had to pay was a heavy one. To repeat the words of Sir Thomas Munro: "Had Holkar taken a

155. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p.121.

156. Holkarshahichya Itihasachi Sadhane, Vol. II, p.46.

157. Sardesai, New History of the Marathas, Vol. III, p.403.

158. Owen, Wellington's Despatches, p.350.

159. Waqai-Holkar, f. 120b.

decided part against us or had the French been able to land a strong detachment, our difficulties would have been so much increased, that I doubt if we should have made any new conquests."¹⁶⁰ The combination of the 'Deccan Invincibles' of Sindhia and Jaswant's sixty thousand horsemen and imposing park of artillery would indeed have been formidable. As Jaswant Rao remained inactive, Lake and Arthur Wellesley had little difficulty in crushing the rest.¹⁶¹ It is unfortunate that when the fate of the nation hanged in the balance, the Marathas could not stand as one man and strike as a united people in time and only just in time. It was a greater tragedy that when the goal seemed already in sight, the bolt fell and the Maratha coalition was shattered. "Thus, while the Maratha spider was weaving his endless cobweb of hollow alliances and diplomatic counter-plots, the mailed fist of Wellesley was thrust into his laboured but flimsy tissue of statecraft, and by a swift and judicious strokes his defence and screen was torn away and his power left naked and helpless."¹⁶²

160. Gleig, Life of Major General Sir Thomas Munro, Vol. I, p.386.
 161. Pearse, Memoir of the Life and Military Services of Lake, p.261.
 162. Sarkar, Shivaji and His times, p.383.

CHAPTER IX

The First Phase of the War between Holkar and the English.

1. Jaswant's predatory campaign during Second Anglo-Maratha War.

While Sindhia and Bhosle were closed in a combat with the English, Jaswant Rao Holkar was strengthening his army through fresh recruitment of soldiers and was replenishing his coffers¹ by levying heavy contributions from friends and foes alike in Malwa² and Rajputana. For this purpose, Holkar had divided his army into two divisions. He himself marched to Mewar with one division and the other was sent with Mir Khan to Bundelkhand by way of Shujawalpur, Douraha, Ashta and Bhursea.³ According to Mohan Singh, as Jaswant marched from Lawa to Shahpura, some of Sindhia's cavalry captains such as Muhammad Khan, Ashraf Khan, Mahmud Khan and Bahadur Khan joined his service, and received 50,000 rupees for their maintenance and robes of honour.⁴ Both Jaswant Rao and Mir Khan plundered and levied contributions as they marched. Mir Khan sent Faizullah Khan Bangash to realize contributions from Bhilsa and deputed the brigade of Muhammad Shah Khan to make collections near Koorwae Bhourasa.⁵ Shahamat Khan and Wahid Ali Khan were granted by Jaswant Rao one and three lakhs of rupees respectively. Shahamat Khan felt slighted over this discrimination and left for Ajmer. Jaswant Rao made Shujat Khan a Subedar and also gave him Rs. 10,000, four pieces of artillery and an elephant.⁶ He was then sent on a Mulkgiri campaign.

1. Valentia, Voyages and Travels, Vol. II, p. 145.

2. Duff, Vol. II, p. 270; Owen, A Selection of Wellesley's Despatches, p. cx.

3. Basawan Lal, Tr., p. 198.

4. Waqai-Holkar, f. 126a.

5. Basawan Lal, Tr., p. 199.

6. Waqai-Holkar, f. 126b - 127a.

A detailed and clear picture of Jaswant Rao's predatory campaign during the Second Anglo-Maratha War is given neither in Waqai-Holkar nor in Amir-ul-Umrah. But Sindhia's Memorandum of complaint⁷ presented to Malcolm on the 23rd April, 1804, shows that Jaswant Rao realised the following sums from the following places, all belonging to Sindhia:-

(1) Pargana Hatwa - Rs. 50,000.

Sarkar of Handia- Rs. 50,000.

Pargana Unchod, Sonkachh, Zora, Waraho and Yoklia -
Rs. 1,00,000.

Tappa Baglie, levied only from principal men - Rs. 45,000.

Pargana Mandasor, Kachrod and Unhel - Rs. 10,00,000.

Pargana Nolai - Rs. 1,00,000.

Tappa Neori and Pargana Battah Tupai - Rs. 50,000.

Pargana Ujjain - Rs. 50,000.

Pargana Shajapur - Rs. 50,000.

Pargana Barode etc. - Rs. 1,00,000.

Pargana Bhilsa - Rs. 2,00,000.

Pargana Udaipur Basoda - Rs. 50,000.

Pargana Sarekur etc. Rs. 5,70,000.

Total:Rs. 25,00,000.

Besides the above the plunder of these places amounted to Rs. 25,00,000.

(2) From Mewar he got a total of forty lakhs of rupees.⁸

7. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p. 252.

8. Ibid., Mohan Singh writes, "The camp, baggage and campoo were sent under Harnath Singh towards Mewar to realise a balance of forty lakhs of tribute, while Jaswant Rao himself went towards Ajmer." (Waqai-Holkar, f. 128b.)

- (3) In Kulalwakul the contributions he raised were -
Pargana Jawad, Jiran and Neemuch - Rs. 2,00,000
Taluka Singoli, Becherie and the Pargana of Begun, Rs. 75,000.
 The contribution and plunder from the Parganas of Bedlee,
 Tana, Bechoree, Segolee Zaat stood nearly at Rs. 4,00,000.
- (4) Jaswant plundered the town of Ajmer and the Pargana of
 Bonian Kekdi and secured nearly Rs. 10,00,000 from there.
- (5) Nagoji and Mir Khan levied contribution in the Parganas
 of Alampur, Ingrawun and Pori to the amount of Rs. 5,00,000.⁹

It is possible that Sindhia might have exaggerated the loss, but there can be no denying the fact that the utmost amount of violence was used by Holkar and his men wherever they went. They left behind them a long trail of plunder.

2. Holkar provokes war against the English.

During the second Anglo-Maratha War Jaswant Rao Holkar's conduct had been rather favourable to the British interests.¹⁰ On the 5th January, 1804, Major General Wellesley wrote to Jaswant, "I congratulate you on having kept aloof from the contest and enabled me to attain this result."¹¹ Lake admitted that if Holkar intended it he could cause serious loss to the English and would have made Lake's approach to Agra very difficult.¹² Even after the battle of Laswaree, some letters were written by Holkar to Lake assuring him that he highly valued British friendship.¹³

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9. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p.252.
 10. Mill, Vol. VI, p.395; Owen, A Selection of Wellesley's Despatches, p.cx.
 11. Sardesai, New History of the Marathas, Vol.III, p.424.
 12. Martin, Wellesley's Despatches, Vol. III, p.471.
 13. Thorn, Memoir of the War-in India, p.326.

On his part Lord Wellesley had no desire to come in clash with Jaswant Rao so long the latter would not interfere with the plans of the Company.¹⁴ Therefore, when the question of settlement with Sindhia and the Raja of Berar was taken up, 'the British Government saw no necessity of including Holkar in arrangements with which he had no concern, much less of entering into a separate alliance with that chief.'¹⁵ Jaswant Rao Ghorpade and Vithal Pant - the yakils of Sindhia - complained bitterly of Jaswant's conduct to Major General Wellesley. They said that Holkar had been the cause of the Second Anglo-Maratha War, of the misfortunes of the Peshwa and Sindhia.¹⁶ The yakils of Sindhia emphasised the fact that their master desired that the friends and enemies of his state should be the friends and enemies of the English. In other words, Daulat Rao Sindhia expected that Lord Wellesley would assist him in crushing Jaswant Rao Holkar. Arthur Wellesley made it clear that if Holkar attacked the Company, the Peshwa, the Nizam or Anand Rao Gaekwad, he must be considered an enemy, otherwise there was no ground for attacking him. The English General also pointed out that Sindhia had lately made a promise to Holkar to return all the territory that had been seized by him. He insisted that this promise must be kept. In case of breach Sindhia would not be entitled to the company's support.¹⁷ In short the company was not prepared to plunge into a war with Holkar simply to avenge some wrongs done to Sindhia. The principle to be followed for the settlement of outstanding claims was 'that in every case it would be necessary first to proceed by the way of amicable remonstrance and negotiation, and that if that should fail, then to have recourse to arms.'¹⁸

14. Sardesai, New History of the Marathas, Vol. III, p.424.

15. Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, p.325.

16. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p.171.

17. Ibid., pp.170-171.

18. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p.191.

After the conclusion of the war, Jaswant Rao Holkar's attitude towards the British was full of inconsistency. The Treaty of Surji Arjungaon, concluded on the 30th December, 1803, created in his mind the suspicion that he would now be singled out for attack by Sindhia and the English. His letters to Lake are a mixture of threat and attachment.¹⁹ Lake in his letter to Lord Wellesley, dated the 19th December, 1803, alludes to the arrogant and improper style in which Holkar addressed him 'with a view to create an opinion^{or} his power.'²⁰ While in another mood Holkar wrote of 'doing no one act contrary to the rules of friendship.'²¹ Jaswant Rao naturally felt uncomfortable when Lord Wellesley concluded a Defensive Alliance with Sindhia at Burhanpur on the 27th February, 1804. According to this Treaty, it was decided that if any power would commit any unprovoked aggression against either of the contracting parties - the contracting parties would proceed to concert and prosecute such measures as the case would appear to demand.²² It should not be forgotten in this connection that Jaswant Rao had instructed his yakil to use all possible persuasion to stop Sindhia from entering into a Defensive Alliance with the British.²³ He had been doing it not in the general interest of the Maratha State as a whole, but for securing his own position.

Lord Wellesley's idea was that Jaswant Rao could not afford to be unfriendly to the English. "I am therefore satisfied", wrote the Governor General, "that after the conclusion of peace with

19. Fraser, Military Memoir of Skinner, Vol. II, p.4; Duff, Vol. II, p.272.

20. Martin, Wellesley's Despatches, Vol. IV, p.3.

21. Asiatic Annual Register, 1805, p.246.

22. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p.279.

23. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p.220, Letter of Malcolm to the Governor General, 28th February, 1804.

Sindhia, Jaswant Rao Holkar instead of attempting to encounter the British arms, will anxiously solicit the countenance and favour of our government."²⁴ In order to be on the same political footing as that of Sindhia, Jaswant Rao demanded that a treaty similar to that of Sindhia should also be concluded with him.²⁵ In the middle of March, 1804, Jaswant sent Sultan Baksh and Nauroz Ali as his envoys to Lake to arrange the terms of an alliance.²⁶ In the morning of the eighteenth, they handed over to Lake Holkar's letter in which he wrote: "Friendship requires that keeping in your view the long-existing unanimity between me and the English Company, you act according to what my vakil shall represent to you, and your doing so will be fruitful of benefit and advantage, if not, my country and property are upon the saddle of my horse, and pleasing God, to whatever side the reins of the horses of my brave warriors may be turned, the whole of the country shall come into my possession."²⁷

As a preliminary to peace with the English, Holkar desired the acceptance of the following demands:²⁸

(1) The British should not interfere with his traditional claims of Chauth upon some Indian chiefs.

(2) The territories formerly held by his family in the Doab and in Bundelkhan^d such as Etawa, Hariana etc. should be restored to him.

(3) Territories which were actually in his possession should be guaranteed to him.

(4) The British should enter into an alliance with him on the same terms as had been the case with Sindhia.²⁹

24. Martin, Wellesley's Despatches, Vol. IV, p.10.

25. Pearse, Memoir of the Life and Military Services of Viscount Lake, p.263.

26. Waqai-Holkar, f. 129a.

27. Asiatic Annual Register, 1805, p.263; Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, pp.332-333.

28. Owen, A selection of Wellesley's Despatches, pp.452-453; Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, p.333; Mill, Vol. VI, p.396; Duff, Vol. II, p.273.

29. Ibid.

The high tone of the demands foredoomed the negotiations to failure. This is what Mohan Singh has also said. According to him, Holkar's yakils 'made some demands which were truly not in the least acceptable.'³⁰ Lake found that the yakils of Holkar possessed no power to conclude any arrangement but were instructed to state the propositions of Jaswant and to acquaint their master with the terms which might be offered by the Commander-in-Chief.³¹ Probably they thought that they would be able to induce Lake to accept their master's demands by an exaggerated description of Holkar's military power and resources.³² The yakils of Holkar asserted that their master had at his disposal forty thousand Rohillas and one hundred and fifty thousand horse, and that the former had offered to serve three years without pay for the liberty of plundering the country.³³ Earlier, Holkar had threatened Major General Wellesley that 'countries of many hundred coss' would be overrun, plundered and burnt' and that Wellesley would not have the leisure to breathe for a moment and calamities would befall on lakhs of human beings in continued attacks of his army which would overwhelm the invaded country like the waves of the sea.³⁴

Lord Wellesley was of the opinion that the authority exercised by Jaswant Rao in the name of Khande Rao over the possessions of the Holkar family was manifestly an usurpation of the rights of Kashi Rao Holkar. Therefore, under the sanction of the Peshwa's

30. Waqai-Holkar, f. 129a.

31. Martin, Wellesley's Despatches, Vol. IV, p.105, Letter of Governor General in Council to the Secret Committee, 15th June, 1804.

32. Ibid., p.106.

33. Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, p.334.

34. Martin, Wellesley's Despatches, Vol. IV, p.107.

authority, the Company's government would be justified in adopting measures for the limitation of Jaswant Rao's power and for the restoration to Kashi Rao Holkar his legitimate rights either by force or compromise.³⁵ In view of this position General Lake, as instructed by Lord Wellesley, gave a positive refusal to Holkar's demands. The vakils of Holkar were asked to leave his camp as they had no power to conclude any alternative arrangement. They were told that 'it was not the custom of the English to boast of their power; but that in the event of a rupture, Holkar would possibly find that he had considerably overvalued his own.'³⁶ Lake also wrote to Jaswant that he must present only such proposals as would be reasonable and acceptable and that he should send his vakils properly authorised.³⁷

Early in March, 1804, Jaswant Rao under the pretext of a pilgrimage went to Pushkar near Ajmer and ravaged both these places. Then he committed vulgar acts of brigandage at Jaipur with great ferocity. It was a direct challenge to the British as the Raja of Jaipur had already accepted British subsidiary forces.³⁸ Another 'act of atrocious barbarity'³⁹ of Jaswant, as Thorn remarks, was the murder of three British officers - Captain Vickers, Dodd and Ryan - in May, 1804.⁴⁰ In obedience to the proclamation of the Governor General these officers had expressed their desire to resign from Jaswant Rao's service. Jaswant Rao at first placed them under

35. Martin, Wellesley's Despatches, Vol. IV, p.4.

36. Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, p.333.

37. Sardesai, New History of the Marathas, Vol.III, p.424.

38. Ibid., p.423.

39. Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, p.326.

40. Malcolm, Memoirs of Central India, Vol. I, p.237. They were murdered at Nahar Mughanah about 14 miles from Udaipur. According to Fraser, seven officers were murdered. (Military Memoir of Skinner, Vol. I, p.303.)

confinement and afterwards, on the pretext that Dodd had carried on a treacherous correspondence with General Lake, put them to death and exposed their heads on pikes. Under the head of Captain Dodd was affixed the letter which that officer had received from the British General. According to Thorn, the letter was a forgery on the part of Jaswant to provide 'a wretched screen for his violation of every principle of justice.'⁴¹

In spite of these 'malignant purposes'⁴² of Holkar, Lake requested him to desist from plundering the territories of the allies of the British and withdraw his troops to his own territories.⁴³ Lake was trying to avoid hostilities with Jaswant Rao as it might lead to war with many other powers.⁴⁴ Moreover, the summer was approaching⁴⁵ and Lake was short of soldiers, horses, supplies and money. His army was much weaker than that of Arthur Wellesley and it could be easily cut off from its base.⁴⁶

3. Holkar's attempt to form a coalition against the English.

Sutherland observes ".....In 1804, he (Jaswant Rao) singly forced a collision with the British power, which is perhaps the most remarkable in the history of our Indian wars."⁴⁷ But before entering into a contest with the English, Jaswant Rao attempted a coalition of Indian powers.

41. Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, p.326.

42. Ibid., p.336.

43. Ibid., p.326.

44. Martin, Wellesley's Despatches, Vol. IV, p.19.

45. Pearse, Memoir of the Life and Military Services of Lake, p.264.

46. Ibid., p.262.

47. J. Sutherland, Sketches of the Relations subsisting between the Government and the Different Native States, p.68.

He made eloquent appeals to the Indian chiefs to rise in arms against the British. Holkar sent an envoy to Sindhia on the 5th February, 1804,⁴⁸ in order to persuade him to withdraw from the British alliance. Daulat Rao Sindhia immediately communicated the facts to the British authorities. Some of his ministers like Sharza Rao Ghatge advised him to send a yakil to Jaswant's camp to obtain accurate information of Holkar's plans and designs.⁴⁹ On the 3rd March, Sindhia's yakil was received with great distinction at the Holkar's camp, and was admitted to a private conference with Jaswant Rao.⁵⁰ The yakil said that Sindhia was disposed to overlook the past conduct of Holkar and was prepared to maintain with him relations of amity and peace; but he would be compelled to take up arms if Jaswant continued to plunder his territories.⁵¹ Jaswant Rao Holkar also despatched letters to the Rajas of Jaipur, Jodhpur and Udaipur. None, except Raja Man Singh of Jodhpur, gave a hearty response.⁵² Jaswant sent Bhaskar Bhau and Tatyā Alikar to Man Singh and expressed his wish to send his family and surplus baggage to Jodhpur. Man Singh agreed on the condition that Jaswant Rao would pay Forty Thousand rupees in cash and Ten Thousand rupees worth of fodder and grain per mensem for their maintenance. Accordingly, Holkar sent his family to Jodhpur with 500 horsemen of the Paigah, 500 horsemen of the risaldars, 14 elephants and raths (carriages) and five pieces of artillery.⁵³ In February 1804, Jaswant Rao entered into correspondence with Rundgall Singh and Ghulam Muhammad, two

48. Owen, A Selection of Wellesley's Despatches, p.454.

49. Martin, Wellesley's Despatches, Vol. IV, p.114.

50. Ibid.

51. Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, p.327.

52. Waqai-Holkar, f.127b.

53. Ibid., ff. 129a - 131a.

well-known Rohilla chiefs of that time. A letter from Rundgall Singh to Jaswant Rao was intercepted by the British authorities. It appeared that six thousand Rohillas were to be combined with ten thousand of Holkar's forces under Rao Pandit and this force was to overrun the territories of the Company from Hardwar to Allahabad and Banaras.⁵⁴

According to this plan Ghulam Muhammad, the other Rohilla Chief, was to be joined by a few Sikh Chiefs, such as Rao Singh, Mir Singh, Gural Singh, Banga Singh and Jadu Singh.⁵⁵ Begam Samru also addressed a letter to Jaswant and it bore the impress of her seal. She professed a warm friendship for him and assured him of her support as well as the support of the Sikhs and the Jats. Later on when she was accused of treachery she denied having written this letter and requested Colonel Ochterlony to trace the authors of this 'infamous forgery'.⁵⁶ Jaswant Rao Holkar wrote a letter to the Raja of Macherry with the object of detaching him from his alliance with the British.⁵⁷ How menacing the power of Holkar had become may be gathered from a letter of Lord Wellesley to Lake. He wrote, "In fact we can not trust him with any power. Experience has manifested his treachery, rapacity and arrogant pretensions, and if we can reduce him, we have lost our ascendancy in India."⁵⁸

4. The First British Campaign against Holkar.

On the 16th April, 1804,⁵⁹ Lord Wellesley directed Lake and

54. Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, p.327.

55. Ibid.

56. Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, p.332; Asiatic Annual Register, 1805, p.262.

57. Martin, Wellesley's Despatches, Vol. IV, p.100, Letter of Governor General in Council to the Secret Committee, 15th June, 1804.

58. Ibid., pp.207-208.

59. Sardesai, New History of the Marathas, Vol. III, p.424.

60. Gurwood, Wellington's Despatches, Vol. III, p.171.

Arthur Wellesley to start a war against Holkar without loss of time. Arthur Wellesley did not consider Jaswant to be a formidable enemy and he wrote to the Governor General on the 18th March: "Holkar has no force, and no possessions in the Deccan, excepting Chandore, and a small territory in Candeish, Umber and its districts, and half of the pergunnah of Slegum, south of the Godavery, of which Scindiah holds the other half. The fall of the fort of Chandore, which must, I imagine, be regularly attacked, will deprive Holkar of all those possessions."⁶⁰ Arthur Wellesley at the same time expressed his inability to co-operate with that force which was to operate against Holkar. Firstly, because he was posted far away, and secondly, because his army was not likely to get supplies owing to famine conditions in the regions north of Poona.⁶¹ He, however, submitted a plan, by which he hoped, Holkar could assuredly be crushed. He suggested that Murray should advance from Gujarat into Malwa and Lake with the assistance of Sindhia's strong contingent of cavalry should drive Holkar back from the north. If the operations could be delayed until after the rains were over he himself would march from the south with his own army and at the head of Murray's force.⁶² It was finally decided that the principal advance should be made from the north by Lake against Holkar.

In fact, Lord Lake had already made the 'forward movement.'⁶³ Early in February 1804, he had sent his heavy park of artillery to Agra and himself started from Biana on the 9th of the month. The road was bad and his march was tedious. Several carts had been

60. Gurwood, Wellington's Despatches, Vol. III, p.171.

61. Gurwood, Wellington's Despatches, Vol. III, p.231m Letter of Arthur Wellesley to Major Malcolm, 20th April, 1804.

62. Pearse, Memoir of the Life and Military Services of Lake, p.266; Duff, Vol. II, p.275.

63. Owen, A Selection of Wellesley's Despatches, p.532.

plundered by the Mewatis on the way. On the 20th of February, the army of Lake encamped at Hindoun and left that place on the 8th March. Proceeding by way of Nanipur, Lake reached Ramgarh the day following and halted there till the twenty second of the month. On the 23rd of March he marched to Ballahira.⁶⁴ Jaswant Rao's policy was to avoid a pitched battle against Lake but at the same time to devastate the Company's provinces. Lake in exasperation wrote to Lord Wellesley on March 22, 1804: "I feel myself in a most awkward situation respecting the robber; for if he does not come on to me, which I do not suppose he will, I cannot move on towards him, as the moment I advance and leave an opening for him, he will give me the slip, get into our territories with his horse, burn and destroy everything he comes near."⁶⁵ It may be recalled that Jaswant had advised Sindhia to follow the predatory method in his war against the British. He had also warned him that if he attempted to fight like a sovereign he would be defeated; if he would fight like a Maratha he would be successful.⁶⁶

On the 6th April, Lake covered nearly ten miles through the pass of Ballaheera, along a road which was made with great difficulty through the ravines, and encamped at Karauli. When Lord Wellesley issued orders to commence war against Holkar in the middle of April, 1804, Lake was in camp some 25 miles north-east of Tonk. On the 17th April, Lake marched to Dowsah. Next day a detachment consisting of the two battalions of the 12th Regiment and the Second battalion of the second regiment of native infantry under the command of Lt. Col. Monson set out for Jaipur. On April 27, Lake advanced to Breeanath

64. Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, pp.329-336.

65. Martin, Wellesley's Despatches, Vol. IV, p.46.

66. Malcolm, Memoirs of Central India, Vol. I, p.233.

and continuing his march on the day following through very bad roads, he encamped at Tonga, about 15 miles from Jaipur.⁶⁷ From this place he struck in a southerly direction and on the 8th of May arrived at Nawai.⁶⁸

On 10th May, a detachment consisting of the second battalion of the Eighth Regiment, the second battalion of the 21st Regiment and ^{the} third Regiment of native infantry with artillery, under the command of Lt. Col. Don was sent against Tonk Rampura, a Rajput town in possession of Holkar, situated 60 miles south-east of Jaipur.⁶⁹ Don had no means of undertaking a regular siege. Therefore, he judiciously decided to capture the place by a coup de main. In order to avert suspicion he encamped on that side of the town which was farthest from the principal gateway. On May 15, at 2 A.M. Don marched from his camp at the head of eight picked companies of infantry and a 12-pounder gun. Captain Rabar, with one twelve and four six-pounders and three companies of the second battalion of the twenty-first followed in the rear to keep in check the enemy if they came from the Tonk side. The third regiment of native cavalry ~~under~~ Major Doveton was left in camp ready to pursue the garrison in case of their flight or to succour the main force, if necessary.⁷⁰ Don marched rapidly and silently round the town but as soon as his detachment advanced within two hundred and fifty yards of the gateway, a picquet of the Tonk battalion on his right hand fired upon them. They made no reply to this ill-timed fire

67. Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, pp. 337-338.

68. Pearse, Memoir of the Life and Military Services of Lake, p. 268. Thorn writes Nawai as Nurwahee (p. 339).

69. Owen, A Selection of Wellesley's Despatches, p. 462; Thorn, Memoirs of the War in India, p. 462; Pearse, Memoir of the Life and Military Services of Lake, p. 268.

70. Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, p. 341.

directed on them from the ramparts. On reaching the gateway Don brought up his 12-pounder and broke it down. His infantry directed an effective fire on the garrison as they crowded on the ramparts near the point of attack. By an incessant and well-directed fire of the artillery Don's storming party found the second gate open and then broke down the third and the fourth gates.⁷¹ The garrison tried to escape but were crumpled up in one short onset by the third regiment of the native cavalry. Don's storming party forced their way into the fort without difficulty. With the fall of Rampura, Holkar lost the only base he had in North India.⁷²

The heat of midsummer had now become unbearable to the European soldiers. Lake felt that it was practically impossible to bring Holkar to a decisive action and it would be better to wait until after the rains, when a combined attack would successfully finish the war in a short time. He, therefore, decided to withdraw his main army to Agra and Kanpur and leave behind as a safeguard Bregadier Monson with five battalions.⁷³ "The force thus detached against Holkar being therefore deemed fully competent not only to guard against any eruption on his part, but also to defeat him in a general action, if he chose to risk it."⁷⁴ Colonel Murray moved out with his troops from Gujarat to give the necessary

71. Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, p.341; Pearse, Memoir of the Life and Military Services of Lake, p.270.

72. Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, p.341; Duff, Vol.II, p.276.

73. Pearse, Memoir of the Life and Military Services of Lake, p.270; Thorn, Memoirs of War, p.342. Basawan Lal writes, "Lake left Bregadier Monson with the six battalions and Captain Lucan with his newly raised Hindustani horse, two thousand men, Bapu Sindhia's army, the Baharich Sawars and added one thousand Jaipur horse making altogether a force of ten thousand cavalry and infantry to follow up the war with Holkar." (Tr., p.213.)

74. Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, p.342.

assistance to Monson. On the 5th June, 1804, the main army of Lake reached Agra. It was an extremely distressing march. The soldiers suffered from intense heat and the burning wind. As Thorn describes, ".... in each of the last four days we buried on an average from ten to fifteen Europeans. Young men in all the vigour of health, dropped dead immediately on reaching the encampment ground, and many were smitten on the road by the overpowering force of the sun (130°F.)"⁷⁵ Scarcity of water made the situation worse. Once a thirsty sepoy offered a rupee for a drink of water but unable to get it even at that price shot himself dead.⁷⁶

Jaswant Rao Holkar's position was no better. His soldiers had suffered terribly from the heat and lack of water⁷⁷ in their rapid flight southward from the Jaipur territory.⁷⁸ In the middle of May, 1804, Holkar heard that a regiment of cavalry under Captain Gardiner and Lt. Lucan were advancing rapidly towards him. Captain Gardiner reached Balloor Khery at nine in the morning of the 29th May. Lt. Lucan followed him at a distance of two miles. At Balloor Khery Gardiner came to know that a chieftain named Tantia, who was a partisan of Holkar, was ready to fight with him. Tantia had with him three battalions of infantry, 200 Mewattis, 3000 horse and 11 guns. Tantia retreated to a difficult pass about 6 miles from 'Coterah' (Kotwara). The place where his battalions took their post had a rising ground on their right, and the front and flanks were completely encompassed by deep ravines. As soon as Gardiner's

75. Thorn, *Memoir of the War in India*, p.345.

76. *Ibid.*, p.347.

77. *Waqai-Holkar*, f. 131b.

78. Sardesai, *New History of the Marathas*, Vol. III, p.424.

battalions advanced, Tantia's force opened a brisk fire. Gardiner divided his troops into three bodies - the centre commanded by Faizullah Khan, the left by Lt. Lucan and the right by Gardiner himself. A fourth party under Bewarry Chowdhury was detached by a circuitous route to take possession of a hill in the rear of the right flank of Tantia's force. Gardiner's move had the desired effect. Tantia sought his own safety, abandoning his soldiers to their fate. His battalions surrendered on condition that they should be escorted safely to the camp of Bapu Sindhia.⁷⁹ At that time two battalions of Gomaji Sindhia, brother of Bapu Sindhia, were advancing to join Jaswant Rao Holkar. Hearing their approach Lucan barred their path. As they had formed no plan of action and as no escape was possible, they surrendered to Lucan.⁸⁰ Jaswant Rao in great alarm made a rapid march to Mandasor, plundering Nal-khera on the way. Harnath Singh with his campoo joined him at Susner.⁸¹ The Kamavisdar of Mandasor, who was a Brahman, fled away at the report of Holkar's coming. Jaswant Rao entered Mandasor without any opposition and began to exact money from people. The people pleaded that they had paid revenue to Sindhia and Harnath Singh had afterwards collected a lakh of rupees. Therefore, the new demand for money was beyond their capacity to pay. What followed is thus described by Mohan Singh - "But as Holkar's need of money was extreme, their plea was not listened to, and Ghulam Beg, the taluqdar of the place was chastised and imprisoned with chains and Rs. 90,000 were realized here by seizing cash and valuable articles and forty five lakhs of rupees by confiscation in places in other districts (talukas)."⁸²

79. Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, p.351.

80. Waqai-Holkar, ff. 132a - 132b.

81. Waqai-Holkar, f. 132a.

82. Ibid., ff.132b - 133a.

Meanwhile, Mir Khan was hovering with a large body of cavalry on the frontiers of Bundelkhand in February, 1804. On hearing his approach, Colonel Powell⁸³ fell back on Erich on the 20th February and detached the brigade of Colonel Shepherd and a considerable body of troops of the Subedar of Jhansi to oppose him. After a short skirmish, Mir Khan returned to Malthoun Ghat. According to Basawan Lal, Mir Khan retreated because the ground being hilly, broken and covered with thorny bushes, nullas and ravines was unfavourable for an action. He makes no mention of Mir Khan's skirmish against Shepherd in which the former was beaten.⁸⁴ On the morning of 22nd May, Mir Khan made a successful surprise attack on two battalions of the English who were besieging Aminta Mulaya, a small fort situated five miles from Koonch. Mir Khan killed fifty artillery men of the enemy and carried off all the artillery consisting of two twelvers, one six pounder, two howitzers and forty tumbrils.⁸⁵ Mir Khan plundered Kalpi and even planned an expedition to Kanpur.⁸⁶ While thus engaged he was urged by Jaswant Rao Holkar to join him 'on the wings of haste.' On the 24th June, a party commanded by an officer of Mir Khan assembled at the village of Mooduna and from there advanced to attack Colonel Shepherd at 'Buckuan', which was situated about four miles from Koonch. Shepherd inflicted on him a crushing defeat. Mir Khan's officer was killed, nearly a hundred of his men and upwards that number were wounded and over and above many horses were killed and taken.⁸⁷

83. Thorn, *Memoir of the War in India*, p.335. Basawan Lal does not write anything about Powell. He writes of one Major Ahmuty as the 'Firingi' administrator of Bundelkhand. (Tr., p.199.)

84. Basawan Lal, Tr., p.200.

85. Thorn, *Memoir of the War in India*, p.343. According to Basawan Lal, about '80 Europeans were killed - not to mention the Sipahis, who were not counted'. (Tr., p.206.)

86. Basawan Lal, Tr., p.209. Thorn writes that Captain Jones repulsed Mir Khan's attack and saved it from plunder. (*Memoir of the War in India*, p.344.)

87. Thorn, *Memoir of the War in India*, p.356.

It was remarkable for Jaswant Rao Holkar to think that Lord Wellesley would begin operations against him after the rains. Jaswant held a council of war at Mandasor. According to Mohan Singh, all his troops with one voice said, "From daily running our strength is gone. Relying on the grace of God, we ought now to fight a pitched battle, because wherever we may retreat, the enemy will hasten behind us and establish their rule in the mahals and talukas. If the battle is put off, all our troops will disperse without striking a blow."⁸⁸ Evidently, a collision between him and British Imperialism was imminent, as the Governor General in Council wrote to the Secret Committee of the Court of Directors: "The reduction of that predatory power was manifestly a measure not only of just policy and necessary security, but of ultimate economy with reference to the finances of the honourable Company."⁸⁹ There can be no denying the fact that it was Jaswant Rao Holkar who provoked war against the English by making extravagant demands and by trying to raise against them a coalition of Indian rulers. But strangely enough while on the one hand he was making efforts to form this coalition against the English, he was not unwilling to enter into a Defensive Alliance with the Company's Government.⁹⁰ A collision between the two powers was inherent in the very logic of events. When Jaswant Rao Holkar saw that it was inevitable he gave up all hesitancy and indecision, dared grandly but unlike Ranjit Singh - the Massinissa of British Indian History - and flashed through the political sky of India like a lonely meteor.

88. Waqai-Holkar, f.133b.

89. Owen, A Selection of Wellesley's Despatches, p.457. Letter of the Governor General in Council to the Secret Committee of the Court of Directors, 15th June, 1804.

90. Pearse, Memoir of the Life and Military Services of Viscount Lake, p.263.

CHAPTER X

The Retreat of Monson.

1. Monson's retreat from Garat to Rampura.

Once Major General Wellesley expressed the opinion that a war against Jaswant Rao Holkar should not be more than a 'Polygar War'¹ and should not last a fortnight.² His confidence was shared by Lord Wellesley who full of exaltation caused by the triumph against Sindhia and Bhosle also thought that one action was sufficient to annihilate the army of Jaswant Rao Holkar.³ William Hickey rightly points out that it had long been the practice of the British Military experts to hold Jaswant Rao in the utmost contempt and to speak of him as a mere free booter. The disastrous retreat of Bregadier Monson clearly proved that they were utterly ignorant of his abilities and genius.⁴

It may be recalled that when Lord Lake withdrew his main army to Agra and Kanpur in the summer of 1804, he left Bregadier Monson with six battalions of sepoys⁵ 'charging him with the protection of the Rajput States and of the British frontier.'⁶ Lake gave no definite orders as to the limits of his movements, but it is difficult to believe Basawan Lal's statement that Lake ordered Monson 'to follow up the war with Holkar.'⁷ Apparently, Monson was not

1. Owen, A Selection of Wellesley's Despatches, p.425.

2. Gurwood, Wellington's Despatches, Vol. III, p.233.

3. Martin, Wellesley's Despatches, Vol. IV, p.190.

4. Memoirs of William Hickey, Vol. IV, pp. 295-296.

5. Basawan Lal, Tr., p.213. According to Thorn, Lake increased the strength of Bregadier Monson's detachment to five battalions. (Memoir of the War in India, p.342.); Duff, Vol. II, p.277.

6. Pearse, Memoir of the Life and Military Services of Lake, p.296.

7. Basawan Lal, Tr., p.213.

content with a safe defensive position and harboured the ambition of inflicting a smashing blow on Holkar by effecting a junction with Colonel Murray. He was certainly rash in risking battle without adequate preparations and coordinating his plans with Murray.

Monsonson's corps consisted of six battalions of sepoys, few pieces of artillery and two bodies of irregular horse commanded by Lt. Lucan and Bapuji Sindhia - altogether totalling about three thousand men.⁸ Monson made a southward advance, crossed the Chambal, pressed after Jaswant Rao Holkar through the Mukundara Pass⁹ and even took possession of the fort of Hinglajgarh on the 1st July, 1804.¹⁰ In the first week of July, news was received from Murray at Badnawar that as he did not have sufficient cavalry¹² to oppose Jaswant, he had decided to return to Gujarat where he expected Holkar's attack.¹³ Lake wrote to Lord Wellesley on July 21, 1804, approving Murray's movements, but it was inconsistent on his part to say that had Murray joined Monson Holkar would have been completely destroyed.¹⁴ Five days after sending his message to Monson, Murray learnt that Jaswant was not attacking Gujarat. So he changed his plan, immediately started back and reached Ujjain on the 8th July - the day Monson began his disastrous retreat. Due to some avoidable mistakes in mutual communications Murray and Monson did not know that they had come so close to each other.¹⁵

8. Thorn, *Memoir of the War in India*, p.357. According to Basawan Lal, Monson's corps made altogether a force of ten thousand cavalry and infantry. (Tr., p.213).

9. The Mukundara pass is situated about 30 miles south of Kota.

10. Sardesai, *New History of the Marathas*, Vol. III, p.425; Duff, Vol. II, p.278.

11. Pearse, *Memoir of the Life and Military Services of Lake*, p.297.

12. Martin, *Wellesley's Despatches*, Vol. IV, p.178.

13. Sardesai, *New History of the Marathas*, Vol. III, p.425.

14. Martin, *Wellesley's Despatches*, Vol. IV, p.178.

15. Sardesai, *New History of the Marathas*, Vol. III, p.425.

Monson gave up all plans of fighting Holkar when he realised that his junction with Murray was not possible. Earlier, he had not taken any precautions. He had entered quite far into Holkar territory without the necessary provisions and sufficient forces. At the southern end of the Mukundara Pass Monson found that he had grain only for two days.¹⁶

Fearing an immediate attack by Jaswant Rao Holkar, Monson began his retreat on the 8th July, 1804. After the capture of Hinglajgarh he had advanced about 50 miles inside from the Mukundara Pass¹⁷ and had encamped at Garot.¹⁸ Monson sent off his baggage to Sonara at four in the morning of 8th July. His troops remained on the camping ground till half-past nine. There was no sign of Holkar by that time.¹⁹ So Monson left for Sonara leaving behind Lucan with the irregular cavalry and two guns²⁰ and the Hindustani troopers under Bapuji Sindhia. Lucan and Bapuji Sindhia were ordered to follow him in half-an-hour and to apprise him of Holkar's movements.²¹ According to Basawan Lal, it was Bapuji Sindhia who gave Monson the 'deceitful counsel' that all his infantry should be sent back beyond the Mukundara Pass and encamped there, while the cavalry should be kept on the Malwa side ready to retire if strongly pressed.²²

16. Duff, Vol. II, p.278.

17. Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, p.357; Mill, Vol. VI, p.404.

18. Waqai-Holkar, f. 133b. According to Fraser, Monson encamped at Bhamapura (Military Memoir of Skinner, Vol. II, p.32.)

19. Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, p.357.

20. Waqai-Holkar, f. 133b. Fraser writes that Lucan had 1500 horse (Military Memoir of Skinner, Vol. II, p.32.)

21. Owen, A Selection of Wellesley's Despatches, p.479, Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, p.357.

22. Basawan Lal, Tr., p.215.

Lt. Lucan was a gallant officer who had distinguished himself in the preceding contest with Daulat Rao Sindhia. The statement of Johan Kuen though incorrect is sufficient to show the importance in which Lucan was held: "Lord Lake returned to Kanpur appointing the brigade of Lucan to oppose Holkar."²³ Jaswant Rao Holkar was not far from Garot when Monson began his retreat. The distance between them was about fifty miles.²⁴ One Narayan Lal in the camp of Lucan wrote to Jaswant, "If you put Lucan to death and advance you will conquer the whole country without a battle."²⁵ Narayan Lal had been long employed as the channel of communication between Holkar, several zamindars in the Doab and the Raja of Bharatpur.²⁶ Jaswant Rao Holkar decided to 'beat his kettledrums for action' and ordered Harnath Singh to join him after collecting together five battalions, 80 pieces of artillery with 30 tumbrils of munitions drawn by oxen.²⁷ He hastened to the village of Pipalya, situated to the north of the Amjhar river on the 8th July. In spite of the smallness of his force, Lucan decided to offer a bold resistance to Holkar. It may be noted here that when Monson had marched through Kota, Zalim Singh had sent along with him a contingent of troopers under the leadership of Amar Singh, the Chief of Palait.²⁸ Amar Singh was determined to hold his ground with Lucan. Describing the

23. Narrative of Johan Kuen, f.33b, published in Bengal Past and Present, Vol. LXXIV, Part II, July-December, 1955.

24. Mathura Lal Sharma, Kota Rajya ka Itihasa, Vol. II, p.489.

25. Martin, Wellesley's Despatches, Vol. IV, p.189.

26. Ibid., p.183.

27. Waqai-Holkar, f. 134a. In Holkaranchi Kaifyat it is written that Jaswant Rao Holkar had 80 thousand swift light cavalry and he routed Monson on the 7th July; (Sardesai, New History of the Marathas, Vol. III, p.426.)

28. Tod, Vol. II, p.598; Mathura Lal Sharma, Kota Rajya ka Itihasa, Vol. II, p.491. Fraser writes that Prithvi Raj, a relative of the Raja of 'Bullamghur', and the Shekawat Raja's son remained faithful to Lucan. (Military Memoir of Skinner, Vol. II, p.32.)

battle between Lucan and Holkar, Mohan Singh writes: "While the skirmishing was going on, Wahid Ali Khan and Bakshi Bhawani Shankar charged at the full gallop into the enemy's force before them and plied their swords and lances so well that Lucan's soldiers took to flight."²⁹ Lucan and Amar Singh kept fighting along with a few supporters. Amar Singh, who fought gallantly, was severely wounded and died on the battlefield.³⁰ About 400 to 500 of Kota troopers were either killed or taken prisoner.³¹ Amar Singh, the chief of Kohla, and Afzal Khan, the brother of Anwar Khan (a minister and high noble of the Kota Raja) were killed.³² Akhayram Pachauli,³³ the Fauz Bakshshi of Kota and Faiz Talb Khan,³⁴ the Nawab of Baharaich, were taken prisoner.

Lt. Lucan's fate was never positively known. Duff heard from Muhammad Khan Bangash, an officer of Holkar, that Lucan was wounded, taken prisoner and afterwards died of a bowel complaint.³⁵ Basawan Lal writes, "A raging Lion, Jaswant came upon Lucan, brave and bold, and striking at his neck one blow. His head upon the green sword rolled."³⁶ Prinsep holds that Lucan died of his wounds at Kota.³⁷ According to Kuen,³⁸ Lucan was killed by a shot on the battlefield and in Holkaranchi Kaifyat it is recorded that Lucan was killed

29. Waqai-Holkar, f. 134b.

30. Mathura Lal Sharma, Kota Rajya ka Itihasa, Vol. II, p.491.

31. Ibid.

32. Waqai-Holkar, f. 134b.

33. Mathura Lal Sharma, Kota Rajya ka Itihasa, Vol. II, p.491.

34. Waqai-Holkar, f. 134b; Basawan Lal, Tr., p.217; Fraser, Military Memoir of Skinner, Vol. II, p.32.

35. Duff, Vol. II, p.279.

36. Basawan Lal, Tr., p.216.

37. Ibid.

38. Narrative of Johan Kuen, f. 33b.

on his elephant.³⁹ Tod saw a tree called Lucan Sahab ka Juihar at Pipalya, where the battle actually took place.⁴⁰ Jaswant did not suffer much in casualties⁴¹ except that Wahid Ali Khan was wounded seriously. Mohan Singh writes that Jaswant Rao captured three thousand horses, four elephants and of the enemy's two guns.⁴² Skinner maintains that had Lucan retreated when Holkar's advance-guard made its appearance he might have saved himself. But Lucan 'desired to make a name and thought he might acquire it by making a brilliant charge before commencing his retreat.' Lucan did check the advance guard of Holkar and even commence his retreat. Though Gardiner did not come up for his assistance, Lucan marched in good order for six miles. But finding himself surrounded by Holkar's troops he was forced to make a stand.⁴³

Bapu Sindhia, who had betrayed Lucan, came to Monson with the news of Holkar's victory at Pipalya.⁴⁴ Monson continued his march to Sonara where his baggage had previously arrived safely. Sonara was about 30 miles from Garot. He arrived at Sonara at 9 p.m. of the 8th of July, 1804,⁴⁵ and moved off his baggage again the same night. He started at four in the morning for the Mukundara Pass and safely reached there at noon on the same day.⁴⁶ A little later Major Sinclair joined him with his battalion (the Second of the Second Native Infantry) from Hinglajgarh where he had been left in

39. Sardesai, *New History of the Marathas*, Vol. III, p.426.

40. Tod, Vol. II, p.598.

41. Waqai-Holkar, f. 134b. According to Skinner, Lucan repulsed the soldiers of Wahid Ali Khan with great slaughter (Fraser, *Military Memoir of Skinner*, Vol. II, p.32).

42. Ibid., f. 135a.

43. Fraser, *Military Memoir of Skinner*, Vol. II, p.32.

44. Thorn, *Memoir of the War in India*, p.359.

45. Pearse, *Memoir of the Life and Military Services of Lake*, p.275.

46. Thorn, *Memoir of the War in India*, p.359.

garrison. Sinclair had left one company of troops under Lt. Owen and Lt. Davidson at Hinglajgarh. These two officers were soon afterwards betrayed by Harnth Singh and were beheaded by his order. This unexpected blow threw the garrison of Hinglajgarh into consternation and they entered Holkar's service under compulsion.⁴⁷

Jaswant Rao Holkar's pursuit of Monson was not sufficiently vigorous in the beginning. After victory at Pipalya he halted there for one or two days and then marched to Sonera.⁴⁸ He encamped about 20 miles from the camp of Monson.⁴⁹ On the morning of the 10th July, a large body of Holkar's cavalry made their appearance near the camp of Monson and continued to increase in numbers till noon the next day. Jaswant Rao sent a letter to Monson requiring the surrender of guns and small arms. Monson refused. Jaswant's cavalry then fell on the front and flanks of Monson's corps and met with desperate resistance. After vain exertions and unsuccessful attempts, Jaswant drew off his troops to a distance of 4 miles where he was joined by his infantry and guns.⁵⁰

Monson continued his march to Kota which was '14 kos beyond Mukundara'.⁵¹ His provisions were nearly exhausted. On his arrival at Kota, Monson, to his disappointment, found that Zalim Singh was unwilling to admit his troops into the town on the plea that he was

47. Pearse, *Memoir of the Life and Military Services of Lake*, p.278.

48. *Waqai-Holkar*, f.135a.

49. *Ibid.*

50. Thorn, *Memoir of the War in India*, p.359; Martin, *Wellesley's Despatches*, Vol. IV, p.333; Duff, Vol. II, p.279; Mohan Singh writes nothing about his action.

51. *Waqai-Holkar*, f. 135b.

unable to furnish them with provisions.⁵² Monson was in the extremity of distress due to violent rains and acute shortage of food in his camp. He reached the Gaumus Nudee Ghat, about 7 miles from Kota, on the 13th July and halted there for that day and the following one. The river was not fordable due to heavy rains. Besides, Monson had to procure a supply of grain from the neighbouring village of Pultan. On the 15th he resumed his march. The roads were so bad that the march was delayed till next morning. The guns of Monson sank so deep in the mud that they could not be extricated and were unfit for use. They were abandoned and the ammunition was destroyed.⁵³ Skinner says that those guns were 'recommended to the care of Raja of Bundi who remained staunch to his engagements in the face of Holkar'.⁵⁴

Jaswant Rao Holkar, in pursuit of Monson, reached Kota. According to Mohan Singh,⁵⁵ he rebuked the Raja of Kota saying, "You are a tributary of my government and yet you have joined my enemy's troops and agreed to guard his property. What sort of conduct is this? You had better deliver to me the property of Monson which you hold." The Raja replied, "It is not our custom to give up a refugee's property. When I saw it beyond my power to resist the English sahibs I agreed to guard their property." Jaswant took from Kota the tribute of last year, two years' tribute in advance and a lakh of rupees as fine for giving assistance to the English.⁵⁶

52. Basawan Lal, Tr., p.217.

53. Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, p.360; Pearse, Memoir of the Life and Military Services of Lake, p.280; Duff, Vol. II, p.280; Mill, Vol. VI, p.406.

54. Fraser, Military Memoir of Skinner, Vol. II, p.9.

55. Waqai-Holkar, f.135b.

56. Ibid., Basawan Lal writes that Zalim Singh allowed Jaswant Rao free passage as he wanted to get the war removed from his own territory. (Tr., p.218.)

On the 17th July, 1804, Monson came to the Chambal which was then not fordable. His troops were suffering greatly for want of food. Next day the European artillery men crossed over on elephants and proceeded to Rampura; but the main body was still detained. Monson sent a party in quest of grain to a neighbouring village where only so much could be obtained as could last for two days. The party on their return to camp repulsed an attack made by some of Jaswant Rao's cavalrymen. Some sepoys of the party were wounded.⁵⁷ In the evening of the 21st July, Monson detached Captain O'Donnel with the flank companies to beat up a body of Jaswant Rao Holkar's cavalry who had formed a ring at a distance.⁵⁸ Captain O'Donnel delivered a surprise attack making admirable arrangements. Mohan Singh writes, "The continued hardships of the past days and nights and the exertions of the fighting during the day just ended were not regarded by them as a cause of the slackening of limbs. With two companies they fell upon the careless Holkar cavalry and slew many of them; the rest fled away with the greatest difficulty."⁵⁹ About 60 troopers of Holkar's cavalry were slain. Owing to their carelessness nearly 80 horses which had been tuned loose to graze freely could not be secured again, and about a hundred horses were wounded.⁶⁰ After 'this dangerous stroke', Jaswant Rao warned his followers saying: "The English do not conduct war face to face. You should make it your habit and tactics to practise every act of watchfulness and self-protection. Never show negligence or failure to keep a prompt watch on what is happening around, as this is always the cause of utter ruin."⁶¹

57. Thorn, *Memoir of the War in India*, p.361; Duff, Vol. II, p.281. Owen, *A Selection of Wellesley's Despatches*, p.482.

58. Thorn, *Memoir of the War in India*, p.361.

59. *Waqai-Holkar*, f.136b.

60. *Ibid.*

61. *Waqai-Holkar*, f.137a.

On the 23rd July, the second battalion of the 21st Regiment crossed the Chambal⁶² upon a few rafts supplied by the chief of Indargarh.⁶³ The second battalion of the 12th Regiment crossed the river on the following day. Lt. Col. Don was sent with the second battalion of the 8th Regiment to a ford, a few miles lower down in order to expedite the passage of the remaining troops. On the 24th Colonel Monson, with 700 men, engaged in a sharp contest with a large body of Jaswant Rao's cavalry who withdrew at sunset with considerable loss. On Monson's side about twenty men were either killed or wounded.⁶⁴ Next morning Monson ordered the second battalion of the 21st Regiment to proceed through the Lakheri Pass and to take up a position near the entrance towards Rampura. The first battalion of the twelfth regiment was sent to join Lt. Col. Don. Monson crossed the Chambal on the 25th July and next morning proceeded with the second battalion of the second regiment and the second battalion of the twelfth regiment to Rampura where he arrived on the 27th July in a most exhausted state.⁶⁵

2. The Retreat of Monson from Rampura to Agra.

After his arrival at Rampura, Monson sent a supply of provisions and other necessaries to the corps under Col. Don who was able to join the main body only on the 29th July, 1804.⁶⁶ Some men of his detachment were drowned while crossing the Chambal. On the way Don's

62. Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, p.362.

63. Waqai-Holkar, f.136a.

64. Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, p.362; Fraser, Military Memoir of Skinner, Vol. II, p.10.

65. Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, p.362.

66. Ibid., Duff, Vol. II, p.282.

men were attacked by the 'mountaineers' who repulsed effectively. Some men were, no doubt, killed on Don's side.⁶⁷ On his arrival at Rampura Monson was welcomed by Major Firth who was sent there by Lord Lake from Agra with a supply of grain, two battalions of sepoys, four six pounders, two howitzers and a body of irregular horse.⁶⁸

Monson encamped at Rampura from the 27th July to the 22nd August, 1804. Meanwhile, Jaswant crossed the Chambal and set out for Bundi. According to Mohan Singh, Shiriju, the Raja of Bundi, 'presented himself in all humility and set himself to removing Jaswant's displeasure. Jaswant reassured and consoled him and the tribute of the place was received into his treasury.'⁶⁹ After some time, Jaswant Rao heard that Monson was getting ready for a battle. He thought that if further reinforcements reached Monson it would be difficult to cope with him. Therefore, he left Dayaram, his 'khas-bardar' with four battalions to guard his baggage and camp near Bundi and himself started with the rest of the army for Bansi Dukari where he had to make a halt on account of heavy rain.⁷⁰

The relief sent by Lake to Monson was timely but not sufficient. Hence, after the middle of August Monson thought it prudent to continue his retreat to Khooshalgarh where he hoped to get a stock of provisions and find a further reinforcement of six of Sindhia's battalions with 21 guns under the command of Sadashiv Bhau Bakshi.⁷¹ He left a garrison with adequate supplies in the fort of Rampura

67. Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, p.362.

68. Ibid., Fraser, Military Memoir of Skinner, Vol. II, p.10.

69. Waqai-Holkar, f. 137b.

70. Ibid., f.138a.

71. Fraser, Military Memoir of Skinner, Vol. II, p.11; Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, p.362.

under Captain Hutchinson of the Bengal Artillery. With the rest of the detachment consisting of five battalions and six companies of sepoys and with two howitzers, Monson reached the Banas about day-break on the 22nd August. The river could not be crossed even by the tallest elephants. Three boats having been found there, one of the battalions was sent across with the treasure under the care of Captain Nicholls with orders to proceed to 'Khooshalgarh'.⁷² On hearing this Jaswant Rao rapidly marched to the Banas and in the morning of the 23rd August pitched his camp about 4 miles distant from the British force.⁷³ On the morning of the 24th, the river having fallen, Monson began to transport across the river the baggage with one battalion. At this very time Jaswant Rao took possession of a large village on the right of Col. Monson and ordered Najib Khan and other cavalry captains to dismount and charge the enemy's infantry. They failed to accomplish anything in the face of an incessant shower of bullet and grape.⁷⁴ Since the river had become passable at many places, Jaswant Rao ordered Bhawani Shankar, Kushaba Bakshi, Chimna Bhau and the Pindara force to cross over above and below the British position. The greater part of Monson's baggage along with four battalions had crossed over by that time.⁷⁵ The second Battalion of the Second Bengal Sepoys under the command of Major James Sinclair, who had been left as a rear-guard, were preparing to follow with the picquets as soon as the rest had passed. At four in the afternoon Jaswant Rao's gunners opened a heavy cannonade on the small body of the English still on their side of the river. Major Sinclair drove away

72. Thorn, *Memoir of the War in India*, p.363; Fraser, *Military Memoir of Skinner*, Vol. II, p.11; Mill, Vol. VI, p.407; Mohan Singh writes that half of Monson's army had crossed over and the other half was standing ready to cross (Waqai-Holkar, f.137b.)

73. Thorn, *Memoir of the War in India*, p.363; Duff, Vol. II, p.282.

74. Waqai-Holkar, f. 138b.

75. Ibid.

Jaswant's gunners as they formed in a battery against his sepoys.⁷⁶ According to Mohan Singh, the English troops even seized several of Holkar's guns. "Jaswant on seeing this ordered one of his khas-bardars to carry to the front eight other guns which had been planted here and fire them. Nay more, he with his own hands applied the match to the touch-hole and drove back the charging British sepoys, slew many of them and recovered his own lost guns."⁷⁷ Fresh batteries showered grape upon Sinclair's gallant band. Sinclair's troops were compelled to retreat and crossed the river under cover of the fire opened by the first battalion of the 14th Regiment which had moved to the opposite bank to check the enemy.⁷⁸ Many of the crossing soldiers were wounded, drowned or killed.⁷⁹ Sinclair with 13 European officers fell in this desperate charge.⁸⁰ Jaswant Rao with all his troops crossed to the other bank of the Banas in safety and made several attacks on Monson who had to abandon his baggage in order to facilitate his retreat to Khooshalgarh. Monson fought as he marched and repulsed successfully several attacks made by Jaswant Rao's cavalry.⁸¹ Mohan Singh writes, "Monson, in spite of such a great king being in pursuit of him, out of the intoxication of valour did not in the least lose heart, but kept up a hot fight. From our side charge after charge was made, but owing to the enemy's shower of grape and shot, no success could be gained, rather many of our men were killed."⁸²

76. Thorn, *Memoir of the War in India*, p.363; Duff, Vol. II, p.283; Fraser, *Military Memoir of Skinner*, Vol. II, p.12.

77. Waqai-Holkar, f.139a.

78. Fraser, *Military Memoir of Skinner*, Vol. II, p.12.

79. Waqai-Holkar, f.139a.

80. Fraser, *Military Memoir of Skinner*, Vol. II, p.12.

81. Ibid.

82. Waqai-Holkar, f.139b. Makhan Singh was slain (Basawan Lal, Tr., p.220.) Owen, *A Selection of Wellesley's Despatches*, pp.541-542.

Monson reached Khooshalgarh on the night of the 25th August.⁸³ Here he found Captain Nicholl, who had arrived on the 24th, and entered the fort. On his arrival Nicholl learnt that it was the intention of Sadashiv Bhau to levy a contribution from the town. Though his force was small and the fort had many gates and openings Nicholl resolved to protect the place against Sadashiv Bhau. The latter sent him a letter requiring the surrender of the elephants, treasure and baggage belonging to the British detachment. Nicholl refused. At nine in the morning of the same day Sadashiv opened his guns on the town and in the evening attempted another attack with his infantry. He was repulsed with some loss. Two of Nicholl's sepoys were killed in action.⁸⁴

With his cavalry Jaswant Rao Holkar, in vigorous pursuit of Monson, encamped around the British detachment at Khooshalgarh in the morning of the 26th August.⁸⁵ He held a council of war with Bapuji Sindhia.⁸⁶ Monson, to his great disappointment, detected correspondence going on between some of his native officers and Jaswant Rao Holkar. He took immediate and strong steps to check the mischief. Nevertheless, two companies of infantry and a large proportion of the irregular cavalry deserted to Jaswant Rao Holkar.⁸⁷ "As terror and despair", writes Mohan Singh, "seized the troops of Monson, Anif Khan, the brother of Jangli Khan with 200 horsemen and 300 musketeers sought our protection, entered Jaswant's camp, received a bounty of Rs.2 per head and was sent to Harnath Singh."⁸⁸

83. Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, p.364.

84. Martin, Wellesley's Despatches, Vol. IV, pp.202-203; Duff, Vol.II, p.284.

85. Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, p.365.

86. Waqai-Holkar, f.140a.

87. Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, p.365.

88. Waqai-Holkar, f.140a.

On the same day at seven in the evening Monson quitted Khooshalgarh. The remaining howitzers were spiked. His troops marched out^{as} an oblong square. During that night and the following day Jaswant Rao's cavalry, supported by some guns, unsuccessfully attempted to penetrate the square. During the night of the 27th Monson took possession of the ruined fort of Hindaun and at one o'clock next morning continued his retreat towards Agra.⁸⁹ The unsuccessful attempts of Jaswant Rao Holkar have been admitted by Mohan Singh who writes, "The Bakshi Sahib's cavalry, who were engaged in giving pursuit and obstructing the enemy's passage mistook the sound of this firing for an attack by the English upon themselves and withdrew to one side to save themselves. In the darkness of the night, both sides were filled with apprehension. In short, one gun and two munition boxes were captured; but the English by their fire of grape and muskets checked our advance; many were slain on both sides, till we reached Mahabir, when we made another attack, with some indecisive result as before."⁹⁰

No sooner had Monson's troops cleared the ravines near Hindaun, Jaswant Rao's cavalry made a desperate charge in three divisions. The sepoys of Monson displayed the most determined coolness. They reserved their fire till Jaswant's cavalry came within reach of the bayonet and then compelled them to flee in all directions.⁹¹ According to Mohan Singh only two or three of Jaswant's cavalymen lost their lives.⁹² At sunset on the 28th, Monson reached the Biana

89. Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, p.365; Owen, A Selection of Wellesley's Despatches, p.489.

90. Waqai-Holkar, f. 140b.

91. Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, p.365; Fraser, Military Memoir of Skinner, Vol. II, p.13.

92. Waqai-Holkar, f. 141a.

pass with his exhausted soldiers. He wanted to halt during the night.⁹³ But Jaswant Rao Holkar, in hot pursuit of Monson, arrived at Biana. Thinking that the battalions of Monson were concealed in the groves of mango, Jawar and plums which were very dense, Jaswant Rao opened a heavy fire. The night was dark.⁹⁴ Monson's camp followers and baggage got mixed with the line and the troops were thrown into a state of disorder. The different corps made the best of their way to Agra.⁹⁵ Near Sikri Jaswant's cavalry made repeated charges, but owing to the vigilance and bravery of Monson's soldiers they got no success. At Fatehpur Sikri Jaswant again encircled Monson from all sides, while the inhabitants of Fatehpur opened musket-fire from their walls. According to Mohan Singh, Monson resorted to stratagem and sent a message, offering to surrender if the safety of his army was guaranteed. Holkar, thinking Monson to be sincere, slackened his pursuit.⁹⁶ Monson, however, hoodwinked him, covered a long distance at night and arrived at Agra on the 31st August, 1804.⁹⁷ His straggling sepoys came daily with noses, ears and right hands shockingly mutilated, in consequence of their refusal to enter the service of Jaswant Rao Holkar.⁹⁸ In this disastrous retreat several promising officers of Monson's detachment were either killed or wounded. The details are given in Appendix A.

3. Criticism of Monson's Retreat.

It would not be fair to blame Lord Lake for choosing Monson to command the six battalions of sepoys in Malwa before he left for

93. Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, p.366; Martin, Wellesley's Despatches, Vol. IV, p.201.

94. Waqai-Holkar, f. 141a.

95. Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, p.366.

96. Waqai-Holkar, f.141b.

97. Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, p.366; Fraser, Military Memoir of Skinner, Vol.II, p.13; Mill, Vol. VI, p.409.

98. Fraser, Military Memoir of Skinner, Vol.II, p.43; Owen, A Selection of Wellesley's Despatches, p.543, Letter of Lake to Lord Wellesley, July 21, 1805.

Kanpur. Monson was not only a distinguished officer but had longer experience of the Indian army than Lake himself had.⁹⁹ Besides, he was at that time a Senior Bregadier of the British army in India. When Monson was chosen to command, General Ware and Colonel Vandeleur had already been killed and General St. John had left the army. Of the Colonels at that time, White was at Gwalior, Blair at Agra, Ochterlony at Delhi, Burn at Saharanpur, Don at Rampura. In their absence Monson was the natural choice.¹⁰⁰ But what is to be regretted is that Lake did not give Monson definite orders as to the limits of his movement.

Lake rightly remarked that it was unfortunate that a man like Monson brave as a lion should have no judgment or reflection.¹⁰¹ Personal valour alone could do nothing. Monson should have been reinforced with European infantry and the absence of it was one of the principal causes of the disaster.¹⁰² Besides, he did not get help from Lt. General Sir John Murray.¹⁰³

Monson himself cannot escape the blame. He committed every possible mistake. Arthur Wellesley, whom Napoleon used to call the best 'sepo-y-general', made a cool analysis of the disastrous retreat of Monson in a letter which moved Sir Robert Peel to say that he considered it the best military letter he had ever read and its author the most powerful writer of the English language; Arthur Wellesley¹⁰⁴ points out in that letter that Monson, knowing his force was^{not} sufficiently strong, should not have advanced to such a distance over so many impassable rivers in the rainy season. Monson had no

99. Pearse, Memoir of the Life and Military Services of Lake, p.296.
 100. Ibid., p.295.
 101. Martin, Wellesley's Despatches, Vol. IV, p.246.
 102. Owen, A Selection of Wellesley's Despatches, pp. xxv, xxvi.
 103. Pearse, Memoir of the Life and Military Services of Lake, p.297.
 104. Owen, Wellington's Despatch, p.426.

stock of provisions. The difference between a good and a bad military position is nothing when the troops are starving. Arthur Wellesley maintains that Monson ought to have attacked Holkar in the first instance. When he chose to retire he ought to have supported the rear-guard with his infantry and to have sent the irregular horse away with the baggage. Besides, when Monson began to retreat he should not have stopped longer than a night at Mukundara. The same reasoning holds good regarding his halt at Rampura. Arthur Wellesley observes that when Monson's picquets had been attacked on the Banas, he should have supported them with his whole corps, leaving one battalion on the northern bank to take care of his baggage. Had he done so, probably a victory would have been gained. Duff remarks that a prompt and spirited attack on the Marathas had always been successful and a prolonged retreat before them, except in the single instance of the British detachment under Lt. Col. Jacob Camac, had invariably ended in failure.¹⁰⁵

Arthur Wellesley drew some important conclusions from Monson's retreat. First, the British should never employ a corps on a service for which it was not fully equal. Secondly, they should take care of their provisions against all enemies and the Marathas in particular. Thirdly, they should not depend upon the Rajas or allies for supply of provisions. Fourthly, all the forts in British possession should be filled up with necessary provisions. Fifthly, when they were to cross a river likely to be full in the rains, they ought to have a post and boats upon it.¹⁰⁶

The retreat of Monson was indeed one of the most terrible military tragedies for the British in India. But one redeeming feature was that

105. Duff, Vol. II, p.278.

106. Pearse, Memoir of the Life and Military Services of Lake, p.310.

even in the extremity of distress Monson's sepoys did not disgrace themselves. Pearse rightly observes that seldom had troops been more severely tried. Every mode of bribery had been tried by Holkar. Such a long retreat was sufficient to try the morale of any troops.¹⁰⁷ The retreat of Monson did not establish the fact that the indigenous Marathi system of warfare was in anyway superior to firearms and discipline of the sepoys under European leadership, for had not Monson dealt several smashing blows on his pursuers. One such blow was given in the night of 21st July, 1804; it thoroughly frightened the Holkar army and they long remembered it.¹⁰⁸ So far as the repercussions of this retreat on the political situation are concerned it had no bearing on the final fate of the British Empire in India. As a matter of fact it made Lake more determined than ever before 'to take the field without delay, in order to repress the growing power of an active enemy flushed with success.'¹⁰⁹ It should, however, be noted that though no loss was done in the long run, the British were momentarily shaken, and the retreat of Monson was sufficient to make Indian Princes think that the British army was after all not invincible. Moreover, the safety of upper India was imperilled for the time-being and all hope for a speedy termination of war against Holkar was belied. It is probable that the disasters in the retreat of Monson were exaggerated, but it is certain that it created a profound impression of dismay among the English in a period of their unmolested prosperity and prestige. To the long catalogue of errors of Bregadier Monson more than to any other cause that his disastrous retreat must be ascribed.

107. Pearse, Memoir of the Life and Military Services of Lake, p.289.

108. Waqai-Holkar, f. 136b.

109. Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, p.368.

Appendix A.

The following officers¹ were either killed or wounded in the retreat of Monson:-

^{of the}
Second Battalion, Second Regiment

1. Major James Sinclair killed on the 24th August, 1804.
2. Lt. Thomas Par " "
3. Lt. N.G. Fulton " "
4. Lt. William Owen " "
5. Lt. W.W. Walker " "
6. Lt. H.P. Stacy " "
7. Lt. Thomas Snelder " "

^{the}
Second Battalion of 8th Regiment

1. Lt. Williams killed on the 24th August.

^{the}
Second Battalion of 9th Regiment

1. Captain James Crokall killed on the 24th August.
2. Lt. A.R. Mailard " "

^{of the}
First Battalion, 12th Regiment

1. Lt. Henry Lloyd - killed on the 10th July.
2. Lt. Ford - wounded on the 27th August.
3. Lt. R.N. Ross - wounded on the 24th August.
4. Lt. T. Bowring - wounded on the 27th August.
5. Lt. Dalton - drowned in crossing the Chambal on the 16th July.

^{of the}
Second Battalion, 12th Regiment

1. Lt. Randall - wounded on the 25th August.
2. Lt. R. Davidson - missing on the 8th July.

1. Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, pp.366-367.

First Battalion^{of the} 12th Regiment

1. Lt. H.H. Harris - killed on the 30th August.
2. Lt. Brough Surgeon " "

Second Battalion^{of the} 21st Regiment

1. Lt. W.J. Nixon - killed on the 24th August.
2. Lt. Arden - wounded on the 27th August.

Artillery - (1) Captain Winbott drowned in crossing the Banas on the 24th August.

CHAPTER XI

Jaswant Rao Holkar in the North

(September, 1804 - 17th November, 1804)

1. Jaswant Rao pursued by Lake.

The disastrous retreat of Monson was the first impressive indication of Holkar menace to Lord Wellesley and it roused him to a sense of gravity of situation. In the autumn of 1804 Jaswant Rao Holkar held a commanding position and emerged challenging almost to a point of dazzling eminence - and to this tremendous challenge to the Company an immediate reply was given by Lord Lake. Jaswant Rao 'received letters from many Rajas of the country around to the effect that they were obedient to him in all matters and would serve him in every way.'¹ But he was wise enough to grasp the fact that the mere retreat of Monson could not ensure permanent success and that much hard fighting and trouble were ahead of him. His soldiers were too tired for any extensive raid or long campaigning and 'the horses' skin had been separated from their bodies from walking on the highways during the rainy season.'²

Jaswant Rao ordered a halt at Fatehpur Sikri so that all his detachments might join him. He put to death four or five Englishmen there and took fine (masadara) from the keepers of the saints' shrine. He sent Bhaskar Bhau to the Raja of Bharatpur with this message, "At this time when I have a fight with the English in view, if you now in accordance with the old relation between us become a partner

1. Waqai-Holkar, f. 143b.

2. Ibid., f. 142a.

in my work and allow my camp and baggage to be lodged in some place in your fort, it would be a cause of increasing our former friendship." Jaswant himself marched from Fatehpur towards Mathura³ with 60,000 horse, 15,000 infantry and 192 guns.⁴

At Mathura the British force was under Skinner⁵ who thought it to be wise to make a timely retreat to Agra. The British force consisted of 4 battalions of sepoys, two regiments of native cavalry and several guns. Skinner left Mathura on the 15th September leaving behind much grain and baggage.⁶ Therefore, Jaswant had no difficulty in capturing Mathura and about five or six hundred Hindustani risaldar cavalry of Skinner joined his service. Here Bhaskar Bhau brought a disappointing reply from the Raja of Bharatpur. The latter advised Jaswant to make peace with the English and expressed his inability to help him. Jaswant again sent Bhaskar Bhau to Ranjit Singh with this message: "When a man chooses a place for his asylum and begs to take up his residence there, it is not worthy of a king and a friend to show bad behaviour."⁷ This time the response was favourable and Ranjit Singh 'strengthened his alliance and partnership of war with oaths.'⁸

Jaswant Rao remained at Mathura for a month immersed in frivolous amusement. He enjoyed to his heart's content the claret and brandy left behind by British detachment and the company of dancing girls. At the same time he issued various parwanas, sent his collectors to the Doab and promised jagirs to everyone who would join him.⁹

3. Waqai-Holkar, f.142b; Basawan Lal, Tr., p.233.

4. Duff, Vol. II, p.285.

5. Waqai-Holkar, f. 142b.

6. Fraser, Military Memoir of Skinner, Vol. II, p.44.

7. Waqai-Holkar, f. 142b.

8. Ibid., f. 143a.

9. Fraser, Military Memoir of Skinner, Vol, II, p.45.

Jaswant's roving parties tried to push into the Doab. They were, however, driven out by Captain Worsley who moved out of Agra on the 26th September.¹⁰ According to Skinner's account, Jaswant sent one 'Allahmeer' with 1000 horsemen to capture the fort of Aligarh. Major Wood, who commanded this fort, had a battalion with him and provisions for several months. Nevertheless, he promised 'Allahmeer' to surrender the fort in 15 days.¹¹

The retreat of Monson rendered it necessary that Lord Lake should take the field immediately and give Holkar a signal defeat. "I am convinced", wrote Lord Wellesley to Lake, "that you will not allow him to attack you, but that you will attack him with all practicable despatch."¹² Lake 'raging like a tiger'¹³ left Kanpur on the 3rd September¹⁴ for Agra. With him were 8th, 27th, 29th regiments of dragoons, the flank companies of His Majesty's 22nd regiment, the 76th regiment and horse artillery.¹⁵ His march was far from comfortable as the rain still poured down in torrents. Lake reached the left bank of the Jumna on the 22nd September and immediately began to cross the river in boats. "The different corps proceeding, as they landed, to Col. Macan's camp, between Agra and Secundra, where the army was formed, and finally brigaded on the 27th of the same month."¹⁶

Jaswant Rao Holkar, who was at Mathura at that time, held a war council. At first he had thought of sending Bhawani Shankar, Murtaza Khan, Bahadur Khan, Gomaji Sindhia and Kusaba Bakhshi with

10. Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, p.370.

11. Fraser, Military Memoir of Skinner, Vol. II, p.45.

12. Martin, Wellesley's Despatches, Vol. IV, p.207.

13. Narrative of Johan Kuen, f.34b, published in Bengal Past and Present, Vol. LXXIV, Part II - July-December, 1955.

14. Sardesai, New History of the Marathas, Vol. III, p.427.

15. Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, p.368.

16. Ibid.

the Hindustani cavalry to Kanpur to fight against Lake¹⁷, but when news was received in Holkar's camp that Lake was marching in their direction he gave up that plan, moved from Mathura to Hansiaganj sent Harnath Singh, Shaikh Qudratulla and Bapu Sindhia to capture Delhi. The families and dependents of the officers were sent to Dig and Bharatpur. Daraz Khan, who had gone towards Aligarh, was defeated in a night attack and joined Holkar's camp at Hansiaganj.¹⁸

Lake's primary object was to inflict on Jaswant Rao Holkar a decisive defeat. He remembered the words of Lord Wellesley - 'If we cannot reduce him, we have lost our ascendancy in India.'¹⁹ When he heard that Jaswant Rao had sent Harnath Singh to capture Delhi, he became worried for the safety of the city. "The garrison was but weak in regular troops and the inhabitants most of them reported to be disaffected."²⁰ Therefore, Lake decided to march from Sikandra on the 1st October, 1804, for the relief of Delhi.²¹ He encamped at Shingna about 9 miles from Sikandra without seeing a soldier of Holkar. The following day, however, Holkar's cavalry made their appearance but showed no intention of making a vigorous stand. They fled away after receiving a few shots from the galloper guns of Lake's cavalry. Lake quietly encamped at Jundapur though Holkar's cavalry continued to hover about 'in prodigious numbers.' On the 3rd October Lake pitched his tent about a mile from the town of Mathura. During his march Holkar's cavalry had fallen upon his left flank and rear and carried off some baggage. Lake halted there on the 4th and sent the picquets to Aurangabad. There 'a party of

17. Waqai-Holkar, ff. 144b - 145a.

18. Waqai-Holkar, f. 145b; Narrative of Johan Kuen, f. 34b.

19. Martin, Wellesley's Despatches, Vol. IV, p.207.

20. John Pester, War and Sport in India (1802-1806), p.332.

21. Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, p.370.

convalescent sepoy's' coming from Agra had been surrounded by a large number of Holkar's cavalry. Before Lake's picquets could reach for their help, about a hundred camels loaded with grain were looted.²² Mohan Singh writes, "So a cavalry force from our side fell upon them and looted much of their property. Every soldier was allowed to keep whatever plunder he had taken."²³

According to Basawan Lal, Lake wanted to avoid an encounter with Jaswant Rao Holkar. This is not correct. Prinsep rightly remarks that the avoidance of action was entirely on the side of Holkar.²⁴ Instead of making a vigorous stand against Lake, Holkar marched out of Farah for Mathura, reached the Jhil of Keola and planned to deliver an attack. The assault failed.²⁵ Some carts full of wine and other things were no doubt taken. All the casks of wine were set on fire as fourteen of Jaswant's soldiers died of drinking this wine. Jaswant encamped at Madhuvan,²⁶ a village about 4 miles from Aurangabad, on the 5th October, 1804. Lake, who was at Aurangabad, decided to make a surprise attack on Jaswant's camp. He formed his army into three columns, the 76th and 3 battalions of native infantry forming the left under Major General Fraser, with the horse artillery on their right; the reserve under Col. Macan at some distance on the right moving parallel with the infantry columns. The picquets were left standing and the rest of the forces remained for the protection of the camp under Lt. Col. Horsford.²⁷ Lake reached near Jaswant's camp early in the morning of the 7th October.²⁸ Jaswant's

22. Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, p.370.

23. Waqai-Holkar, f. 146b.

24. Basawan Lal, Tr., p.223.

25. Waqai-Holkar, f. 146b. Kuen writes that 'a great battle' was fought at the Jhil of Keola (Koila) (f. 134b.)

26. Waqai-Holkar, f. 146b.

27. Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, p.371.

28. Ibid., Mohan Singh writes that Lake made a surprise night attack (f. 147a.)

soldiers had already taken the alarm. As the horse artillery of Lake opened a brisk cannonade, Jaswant made a rapid retreat which rendered it impossible to effect a charge.²⁹ Lake made another attempt on the 10th October to bring Jaswant to an engagement but in vain. Holkar's soldiers were on their guard and were prompt in giving the signal of alarm by firing matchlocks and burning lights. They would hover round Lake's camp and flourish their weapons 'making at the same time a noise like jackals' from a comfortable distance. On one occasion Lake succeeded in killing about thirty of them and making several prisoners. He gave a rupee to each of the prisoners and sent them back to Jaswant with the message that 'none but the cowards treated their prisoners with cruelty.'³⁰

Lake left Mathura on the 12th October. His judicious arrangement had so far prevented attacks by Holkar's cavalry. On the 13th of the same month at about noon Holkar's men suddenly appeared in considerable numbers from the surrounding fields where they had concealed themselves amidst the high corn. Thorn claims that a few rounds of grape from the gallopers had good effect.³¹ Mohan Singh's account is somewhat different and inconsistent. At one place he writes that Jaswant went in hot pursuit of Lake, fell on his camp, slew or imprisoned many of his soldiers and brought away much booty; but admits at the same time that the 'sahibs' were 'ustads' (masters) of the art of war and they did not allow Jaswant to gain any success.³²

29. Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, p.371. According to Pester, Holkar had a narrow escape from a cannon-shot (War and Sport in India, p.335.)

30. Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, p.372.

31. Ibid., p.373.

32. Waqai-Holkar, f. 148b.

In an action Bhawani Shankar was wounded by a musket-bullet in his left thigh and he was sent to Dig for treatment.³³ Lake's march on the 14th October was smooth as Jaswant appeared little inclined to renew his attack. The reason is clear from Mohan Singh's statement: "Everyone who has seen battles knows what sort of work it is to exert one's hands and feet in the river of the artillery fire poured forth by the English Sahibs who are experts in the use of the arm."³⁴ About 10 O'clock on the 15th, Lake passed through the town of Kosee (written also as Khoose) where it was said that Holkar had spent the preceeding night there and made the dancing girls dance round the head of a European soldier of the 76th Regiment.³⁵ On the 16th, Lake passed by the town and fort of 'Pulwall'.³⁶ but did not stay there as the people threatened to fire on the British soldiers and Lake did not like to be diverted from his main object. Next day he marched as usual passing by Ballamgarh along a very bad route leading to Delhi. On the 18th Jaswant's cavalry attacked his rear, killed ten or twelve soldiers and injured the same number; but they were soon beaten off. The same evening Lake sent half of his camp equipage to Delhi.³⁷ Early in the morning of the 19th October, the whole army was ready to set out in pursuit of Jaswant Rao who was 4 days march ahead of them. Lake gave an order for halting due to inadequate supply of provisions and lack of cattle for its conveyance. Besides, there was no immediate danger in Delhi where Colonel Ochterlony

33. Waqai-Holkar, f. 148b.

34. Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, p.373; Waqai-Holkar, f. 149a.

35. Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, pp. 373-374.

36. 'Pulwall' was situated about 36 miles south of Delhi.

37. Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, pp. 374-375.

had succeeded in gallantly defending himself.³⁸ News was received that Col. Murray had captured Indore.³⁹ After his failure at Delhi, Jaswant Rao Holkar decided to lay waste the British territories in the Doab in the true Maratha style of predatory warfare.⁴⁰ His guns were drawn by the best bullocks in the country assisted by elephants.⁴¹ Jaswant visited the temple of Kali and the tomb of Khwaja Qutubuddin at Delhi. In the last week of October he levied contributions from the places round about, went to Sonpat and then crossed the Jumna by a ford at Sawarghat.⁴²

Lake, determined to give Holkar a hot pursuit, crossed the Jumna at a ford about three miles from Delhi on the 31st October.⁴³ With him were His Majesty's 8th, 27th, 39th Regiments of light dragoons, the horse artillery, the 1st, 4th and 6th regiments of native cavalry with the reserve brigade of infantry under Lt. Col. Don. Lake did not take wheeled carriages with him. He ordered that each man was to be issued six pounds of flour which was to suffice for six days. On the 1st November, he reached Bagpat. Here he learnt that Lt. Col. Burn, with his battalion and six guns, had marched from Delhi a few days before to Saharanpur, where the Civil Magistrate Mr. Guthrie had been besieged by the Sikhs. Jaswant's cavalry had attacked the detachment of Burn but without success near Kandlah. Burn had taken shelter in the small mud fort of Shamli and prepared for a desperate

38. Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, p.375.

39. Pester, War and Sport in India, p.340.

40. Owen, A Selection of Wellesley's Despatches, p.495, Letter of Governor General in Council to the Secret Committee of the Court of Directors, March 24, 1805.

41. Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, p.381.

42. Waqai-Holkar, f. 149b.

43. Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, p.383.

defence.⁴⁴ The Shamli chief was friendly at heart to Holkar.⁴⁵ The people of Shamli had refused to supply provisions to Burn's soldiers. Lake reached Shamli on the 3rd November to the great joy of Col. Burn who had displayed great fortitude under excessive hardships.⁴⁶

When Jaswant heard of Lake's arrival in the Shamli district, he entered the pargana of Thana with 2000 Sikh cavalry and encamped at Khatauli. Here Begam Samru sent him Rs. 32,000 as a token of hospitality though her sympathy was for the English. It was she who had sent a battalion to the rescue of Mr. Guthrie. Lake had thought otherwise till Mr. Guthrie explained to him the real situation.⁴⁷ Jaswant Rao himself understood Begam Samru's deceptive behaviour fairly late. After roving in that district for sometime Jaswant Rao marched towards Hapur which was 20 miles from Meerut.⁴⁸

Lake left Shamli on the 5th November in an easterly direction to Mahmudabad, reached Khatauli on the 7th of the same month and then moved on to Meerut.⁴⁹ For the protection of the northern parts of the Doab, Lake left Col. Burn with the second battalion of the 14th Regiment, the First battalion of the 21st Regiment, Captain Atkins's battalion and Captain Murray's Baharich cavalry. On the 9th November Lake arrived at Hapur in pursuit of Jaswant who was about 30 miles ahead of him. Jaswant was burning and plundering the villages as he was moving along. The villagers of Pillowna defended themselves bravely and killed several of Holkar's men. Lake reached Kuriaganj on the 13th November, Khassgunj on the 14th and the day following encamped near 'Sheerpore.' On the 16th he saw the village of Aliganj

44. Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, p.384.

45. Basawan Lal, Tr., p.225.

46. Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, p.384.

47. Waqai-Holkar, ff.151a-151b; Duff, Vol. II, p.288.

48. Waqai-Holkar, f. 152a.

49. Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, p.387.

still burning.⁵⁰ Basawan Lal has thus depicted the distress of Lake in the arduous pursuit of Jaswant Rao Holkar:-

"Harassed on all sides, hope was flown
Shivered like glass against a stone.
Vainly they practised stratagem,
Too deep was Jaswant Rao for them.
But onward marched in iron square
Sullen and sunk in deep despair."⁵¹

The above description is obviously a pure flight of political imagination. The firmness of Lake was unshaken.

2. The failure of Harnath Singh at Delhi.

Early in the autumn of 1804, Jaswant Rao had sent Harnath Singh with Shaikh Qudratullah and Bapu Sindhia to capture Delhi, thinking that 'it would produce very good results, because in view of the dilapidated condition of the city-walls'⁵² The British garrison was insufficient and people of Delhi were reported to be disaffected towards the British.⁵³

Col. Ochterlony, the British Resident at the Mughal Court, made vigorous and wise preparations for the defence of Delhi. He got valuable assistance and suggestions from Lt. Goodall and Captain Skirving. Lt. Goodall carried out all the defensive works such as repair of fallen ramparts and shattered walls of Delhi. As Harnath Singh moved towards Khooshalgarh, Ochterlony called Col. Burn from Saharanpur, Captain Harriolt from Rohtak and Lt. Birch from Panipat.⁵⁴

50. Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, pp. 388-389.

51. Basawan Lal, Tr., p.225.

52. Waqai-Holkar, ff. 145a-145b.

53. Pester, War and Sport in India, Vol. II, p.332.

54. Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, p.376; Owen, A Selection of Wellesley's Despatches, p.493.

He 'also extinguished the sparks of disaffection which had begun to make an alarming appearance among the inhabitants.'⁵⁵

Harnath Singh took up a position close to the city wall of Delhi on the 7th October, 1804.⁵⁶ The troops of Ochterlony retired within the walls.⁵⁷ A detachment of irregular cavalry under Lt. Hunter of the Second Battalion of the 14th Regiment accompanied by Captain Carnegie and Lt. Rose moved out to reconnoitre the force and position of Harnath Singh. About 300 Mewattis, who had been stationed in the old fort, deserted. On the 8th October Harnath opened a heavy cannonade against the south-east angle of the city wall; but as proper reply was given from the opposite side, he withdrew after levelling thirty or forty feet of the parapet.⁵⁸ On the 10th a party of 200 men from the second battalion of the 14th Regiment accompanied by Lt. Evans, Heathcote and Locket, and one hundred and fifty men from Captain Harriott's corps under Captain Carnegie and Lt. Woodville, with a reserve of 50 men and a six pounder under Lt. Dickinson moved out under the command of Lt. Rose. The sallying party succeeded in getting possession of the battery and spiked the guns. They returned with very little loss. Captain Keating erected a battery towards the south-east bastion and kept the enemy in check.⁵⁹ Next morning Harnath Singh again opened fire on the walls but it was not much effective.⁶⁰ His artillery was silenced by the murderous fire of Ochterlony's new battery. Harnath now decided to carry on his operations towards the southern face of the city and posted his heaviest guns and large bodies of infantry under cover of extensive gardens and ruins.⁶¹ During the whole of the 13th an unusual silence prevailed

55. Thorn, *Memoir of the War in India*, p.380.

56. Waqai-Holkar, f.147b; Mill, Vol. VI, p.411.

57. Thorn, *Memoir of the War in India*, pp.377-378.

58. Ibid.

59. Thorn, *Memoir of the War in India*, pp.377-378.

60. Ibid.

61. Ibid., p.379.

which indicated that Harnath was planning his blow. Next morning Harnath's guns began to open fire in every direction. His infantry made an assault upon the Lahore gate but were repulsed with considerable loss. Lt. Simpson of the second battalion of the 17th regiment, who commanded the post of Ajmer gate, was mortally wounded. In the evening Harnath Singh threatened an attack by drawing some guns towards the Kashmir gate. Ochterlony promptly sent a few pieces of artillery to the bastions on that face and placed a six pounder on the top of the Ajmer gate and another on Lahore gate. The genius of Ochterlony saved the day. In order to keep up the spirits of his men, Ochterlony provided them sweetmeats at the expense of government soon after the commencement of the siege.⁶²

Jaswant Rao Holkar had already informed Harnath Singh of Lake's march towards Delhi and had urged that if his task had not been accomplished he should withdraw. Before the morning of the 15th October, Harnath moved off with his force and retreated by way of Najafgarh and Farrukhnagar to Rewari and remained stationary there.⁶³ Ochterlony received the warmest congratulations from Lake. Thorn rightly remarks, "Nothing could exceed the fatigues suffered both by the officers and men but the cheerfulness and patience with which it was endured and this defence of a city ten miles in circumference for nine days, against a well-prepared and desperate enemy could not fail to command universal admiration."⁶⁴

62. Thorn, *Memoir of the War in India*, p.380. Kuen writes, ".... for 20 days there was great fighting between him and Ochterlony Sahib, the Nazim of Delhi Subah." (f.33b.); Duff, Vol.II, p.287.

63. *Waqai-Holkar*, ff. 147b-148a.

64. Thorn, *Memoir of the War in India*, p.380.

3. Harnath Singh's defeat at Dig.

Having arrived at Delhi, Lake sent Major General Fraser to chastise Harnath Singh. Fraser's force consisted of His Majesty's 76th Regiment, the Company's European Regiments and six battalions of sepoys. On the 12th November, 1804, he arrived at Govardhan and pitched his camp near that of Harnath Singh. The latter had encamped between a large tank and an extensive morass, his right covered by a fortified village and his left extending to the fort of Dig.⁶⁵

On hearing Fraser's arrival Harnath Singh held consultations⁶⁶ with Bapuji Sindhia and Mirza Asraf Beg. Their decision was that leaving the water of the Jhil on their right they should take post in the following manner: left wing under Mirza Ashraf Beg, right wing under Baryar Singh, vanguard under Gomaji Sindhia while Harnath Singh himself should lead the rear and support all the divisions from behind.⁶⁷

Fraser marched to the attack at three O'clock in the morning of the 13th November. The column had to detour considering to avoid the morass. Having arrived at the fortified village on the hill which covered the enemy's right about day-break, Fraser's troops immediately wheeled into line. The 76th Regiment and two battalions formed the first, and the remaining troops the second line. The former coming upon the enemy opened fire with grape.⁶⁸ Harnath's soldiers continued to fall in heaps. He fled away from the field to the bastion of the fort and was dragged upto the top of wall by means of a rope tied to

65. Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, p.394; Waqai-Holkar, f.155a.

66. Waqai-Holkar, f. 155a.

67. Ibid.

68. Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, p.395; Duff, Vol. II, p.289.

his waist.⁶⁹ Mirza Ashraf Beg and Baryar Singh fought bravely, the latter received two wounds from grape.⁷⁰

While the fight was going on Major Hammond with the first battalion of the second regiment and the second battalion of the 15th Regiment of native infantry bravely maintained his position to the east-ward of the tower end of the morass against destructive fire from eighteen and twelve pounders. Fraser succeeded in carrying the first range of the guns of Harnath Singh, but he had to face a brisk cannonade from the second range. Here a cannon-shot carried away Fraser's leg. Col. Monson took the command and drove the enemy away from the second range. In the meantime a body of Harnath's cavalry came round and retook the first range of guns.⁷¹ Captain Norford of the 76th Regiment with only 28 men gallantly charged them and drove them off a second time. Col. Monson now ordered up some more six pounders and moved upon the enemy's left flank which now made a speedy retreat towards the morass.⁷² A large number of the fugitives were burnt to death by the flames of the combustible matter which caught fire from muskets.⁷³ The victory was decisive. Mohan Singh writes, "..... if the English sahibs had given chase, they could have captured the fort of Dig that very day."⁷⁴

The loss on Holkar's side was very heavy. According to Thorn, about two thousand of his soldiers were either killed or drowned. Eleven six pounders, two twelve pounders, nine tumbrils and four ammunition carts lost by Monson's detachment were recaptured. Fifty-

69. Waqai-Holkar, f. 155b.

70. Ibid.

71. Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, pp. 395-396; Duff, Vol. II, p. 289; Owen, A Selection of Wellesley's Despatches, p. 544, Letter of Brigadier Monson to Marquess Wellesley, November 14, 1804.

72. Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, p. 396.

73. Waqai-Holkar, f. 155b.

74. Ibid.

three guns of various types from 6 pounders downwards and two brass howitzers were seized by the British. The number of killed and wounded on British side amounted to six hundred and fortythree.⁷⁵ The officers who displayed conspicuous gallantry were Lt. Col. Burnet, Col. Horsford, Lt. Col. G. S. Browne, Major Menzies, and Captain Macknight. Fraser, who died of his wounds a few days after,⁷⁶ was the hero of the victory at Dig which was won by sheer hard fighting.⁷⁷ The rest of the details are given in Appendix B. "I have every reason", wrote Lake to Lord Wellesley, "to believe that the action of the 13th was a very great business. The personal courage of Monson and others alone saved it. It was a most glorious day and deserves every credit possible."⁷⁸

4. Lake defeats Holkar at Farrukhabad.

On the 16th November, 1804, when Lake arrived at Aliganj, Jaswant Rao Holkar at Farrukhabad was 'engaged in pleasure and repose and turned the night into day and the day into night, without any fear of anxiety.'⁷⁹ According to Basawan Lal, Nasir Jang, the Nawab of Farrukhabad, induced Jaswant to stay there and sent him beautiful dancers and singers.⁸⁰ It is also possible that Lake might have written to the Nawab of Farrukhabad to detain Jaswant through some device threatening at the same time if he failed to do it there would be a rupture in the friendship between him and the British.⁸¹

75. Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, p.397.

76. Ibid.

77. Pearse, Memoir of the Life and Military Services of Lake, p.341.

78. Martin, Wellesley's Despatches, Vol. IV, p.249, Letter of Lake to Lord Wellesley, November 27th, 1804.

79. Waqai-Holkar, f. 152b.

80. Basawan Lal, Tr., p.226.

81. Narrative of Kuen, f.34b.

Though Jaswant Rao was 36 miles ahead of him, Lake decided to surprise him by a 'forced night's march.' Accordingly, at nine O'clock in the evening of the 16th November, 1804, Lake moved on towards Farrukhabad with his cavalry. He did not take with him any tent or baggage. Just then one of the troopers of Bhawani Shankar's risala, who was going home towards Mau, heard of Lake's movement. He hurried back to Jaswant's camp and gave the information. Muhammad Khan Afridi confirmed the news. Ganpat Rao and Jaswant Rao Holkar regarded it as baseless rumour and did not like to be disturbed in their enjoyment of dance and music.⁸² Holkar had great faith in his spies.⁸³

Major Salkeld's indefatigable zeal and attention made the surprise attack of Lake at Farrukhabad a complete success.⁸⁴ On the 17th November at the first streak of dawn Lake reached the skirts of Jaswant's camp. Most of his follower's 'remained in sleep and negligence.'⁸⁵ Lake started with several rounds of grape fired from the horse artillery.⁸⁶ Even the second sound was not believed by Jaswant's soldiers to be a hostile discharge. The chance explosion of one of Lake's artillery tumbrils ultimately awakened them.⁸⁷ The 8th Light dragoons were the first to enter amongst the ranks of Holkar and began to cut them down. Other regiments followed suit.⁸⁸ Jaswant Rao Holkar was lucky to escape. He mounted his horse which was soon killed by a bullet. Then he mounted another horse and took the road to Mainpuri, galloping off full speed with what troops he had immediately about him.⁸⁹ Many of his soldiers, unable to escape, climbed up the

82. Waqai-Holkar, ff. 153a-153b.

83. Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, p.391.

84. Martin, Wellesley's Despatches, Vol. IV, p.249.

85. Waqai-Holkar, f. 153b.

86. Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, p.390.

87. Waqai-Holkar, f.153b.

88. Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, p.390.

89. Waqai-Holkar, f. 154a.

trees and hid themselves while Lake's cavalry passed underneath without noticing them. But as they opened fire on the rear divisions of the British force, they were discovered. They were pistolled and began to tumble down lifeless from the trees.⁹⁰ The whole plain near Farrukhabad was covered with dead bodies.

"The vigilance of fear and habitual predatory precaution", writes Fraser, "prevented his (Jaswant's) sustaining any serious loss."⁹¹ Even then the loss on Holkar's side was very heavy.⁹² About three thousand of his men were killed in action.⁹³ According to Thorn, Lake's loss was trifling, being only two dragoons killed and about 20 men wounded with about 75 horses killed. Lake continued the pursuit of Jaswant for over ten miles. He gave it up as his soldiers were tired after the battle and a strenuous march of 58 miles during the preceding day and night.⁹⁴

The autumn campaign of Lake (from September to 17th November, 1804) was a masterpiece of inspired leadership, resolution, movements and manoeuvres. On the other hand, Jaswant Rao Holkar showed poor strategy and organisation. Consequently, his army was shaken and decimated by humiliating reverses at Delhi, Dig and Farrukhabad. Though this period was marked by a series of reverses it could not weaken the iron will and firm determination of Jaswant Rao Holkar. His power was far from being effectively broken. As the amazing combativeness had not deserted Jaswant Rao Holkar, the flame of war which died down in one quarter spurred up in another.

90. Thorn, *Memoir of the War in India*, p.391.

91. Fraser, *Military Memoir of Skinner*, Vol. II, p.16.

92. Waqai-Holkar, f. 154a.

93. Thorn, *Memoir of the War in India*, p.392.

94. *Ibid.*, pp.391-392.

Appendix B

The casualty list of the British army at the battle of Dig as
given in Thorn's Memoir of War in India (p. 397)

Killed

1. Captain Henry Norford - H.M. 76th Regiment.
2. Lt. John Forbes - First battalion, Second Regiment Native Infantry.
3. Lt. C.C. Faithful - First battalion, Fourth Regiment Native Infantry.
4. Lt. Burgess - First battalion, Fourth Regiment Native Infantry.
5. Assistant Surgeon of Lyons - Second battalion Fifteenth Regiment.

Wounded

1. Captain J. Chisholm - His Majesty 88th Regiment doing duty with the 76th Regiment.
2. Lt. Mansell - His Majesty 78th Regiment during duty with recovered Europeans.
3. Captain Ensign Sampton - His Majesty 76th Regiment.
4. Lt. Nicholl - First Battalion 4th Native Infantry.

- | | | |
|----------------------------------|---|----------------------|
| 1. Lt. A. Maxon severely wounded |) | |
| 2. Lt. J. Chatfield " " |) | Honourable Company's |
| 3. Lt. T. Bryant " " |) | European Regiment. |
| 4. Lt. T. Merryman |) | |

- | | | | |
|---------------------|---|--------------------------------------|------------------|
| 1. Lt. James Murray | - | First Battalion | Second Regiment. |
| 2. Lt. Hunter | - | " | Fourth " |
| 3. Lt. James Turner | - | " | Fifteenth " |
| 4. Lt. H. Shibley | - | " | " " |
| 5. Lt. C.S. Schnell | - | " | " " |
| 6. Lt. Penny | - | " | " " |
| 7. Lt. Hales | - | Second Battalion Fifteenth Regiment. | |

CHAPTER XII

The Fall of Dig.

1. The lull in the war (17th November - 13th December, 1804)

Rage and humiliation possessed Jaswant Rao Holkar after experiencing the bitter taste of defeats in the autumn of 1804. Whatever territory he possessed in the Deccan had already been reduced by the capture of all his forts, including Chandore and Jalna.¹ Lt. Col. Wallace crossed the Godavary on the 18th September with his infantry and was joined by Lt. Col. Haliburton on the 27th of the same month.² The detachment of Wallace was further strengthened by the arrival of his own cavalry division and the Peshwa's contingent on the 30th September and early in the month of October. 'Lasselong', a small fort belonging to Holkar, surrendered on the 8th October. Forty-four men of the British detachment were killed in action. The fort of Chandore was stormed with complete success on the 12th and the garrison were allowed to go wherever they pleased after their surrender. 'Dhoorb', another fort of Holkar, was captured on the 14th. On the 21st October, Wallace arrived before Jalna and after two days the garrison surrendered on the condition of being allowed to march away with their arms and property.³ Thus, by the winter of 1804, it was clear that a profound change had come in the position of Jaswant Rao Holkar and a feeling of exasperation was noticeable in his camp.

After the defeat at Farrukhabad Jaswant Rao made a speedy retreat to Mainpuri, set fire to the cantonment of that place and then by

1. Duff, Vol. II, p.291.

2. Owen, A Selection of Wellesley's Despatches, pp.502-503, Letter of the Governor-General in Council to the Honourable the Secret Committee of the Honourable Court of Directors, March 24, 1805.

3. Ibid.

successive marches rejoined his army at Dig.⁴ He was annoyed with Harnath Singh for his incapacity and had him beaten with sticks. Harnath secured his pardon by agreeing to pay him six lakhs of rupees. In the meantime the backbiters in Holkar's camp had estranged Jaswant's mind from Bhawani Shankar. When he met him he did not care to enquire about the healing of the wound which Bhawani Shankar recently had, but asked him how the war should be conducted in future. Bhawani Shankar suggested that Jaswant Rao should first of all pay his soldiers their dues and then try to buoy up their lost morale. Jaswant Rao did not approve of it, dismissed Bhawani Shankar from the post of Bakhshi and appointed Jamdev Bhand in his place.⁵ Mirza Ashraf Beg proposed to Jaswant, "If you permit me, I shall make a selection of the best men from the three brigades according to my own judgment and with them go forth to meet any enemy that you may point out." Holkar laughed at the idea of the gasconading officer. Ashraf Beg felt humiliated, went off to Bharatpur and later on left the service of Jaswant Rao.⁶

After the rout at Farrukhabad Jaswant Rao Holkar was compelled to depend upon Ranjit Singh - the Raja of Bharatpur - for supplies of money and arms. As Thorn⁷ remarks, "From a principal he (Jaswant) was reduced in a manner to a state of dependency on the Rajah of Bhurtpoor, while the latter, on the contrary from an auxiliary, had now become a principal." According to Mohan Singh, Ranjit Singh said to Jaswant, " From having given shelter to your camp and baggage

4. Waqai-Holkar, f.154b.

5. Waqai-Holkar, f.157a.

6. Ibid. According to Basawan Lal, Ashraf Beg deserted Holkar after the capture of Dig (Tr., p.230.)

7. Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, p.403.

here, I have gained the fruit that the war has come down on my head."⁸ Nevertheless, he assigned the fort of Dig to Holkar for the shelter of his camp and baggage. Besides, Ranjit Singh placed his Diwan, Rai Singh, and his son, Lachman Singh, with two fully armed battalions under Holkar.⁹ This help was invaluable for Jaswant Rao who was depressed by a sense of calamity after his recent reverses.

Monson displayed fatal lack of judgment by falling back on Mathura for supplies after his victory at the battle of Dig. "If the English Sahibs", writes Mohan Singh, "had given chase, they could have captured the fort of Dig that very day."¹⁰ The retreat of Monson was a glaring error as it enabled the Holkar army to escape to Dig. Lake justly commented that Monson could have easily detached two regiments for drawing supplies from Mathura.¹¹

Ranjit Singh's behaviour was far from friendly to the British. Earlier, Lake had concluded a friendly treaty with him in which the Raja had expressed his attachment to the British.¹² The territory in the independent possession of Ranjit Singh had been guaranteed by this treaty. He had also been permanently relieved from the payment of tribute to the Marathas and from the apprehensions of exactions and encroachments on the part of any foreign state.¹³ In spite of this treaty, Ranjit Singh was in regular correspondence with Holkar during the retreat of Monson. His sympathy for Holkar was known to everyone. On October 29, 1804, Pester wrote, "It was

8. Waqai-Holkar, f. 157b.

9. Ibid.

10. Ibid., f. 155b.

11. Pearse, Memoir of the Life and Military Services of Lake, p. 341.

12. Asiatic Annual Register, 1805, p. 210.

13. Asiatic Annual Register, 1805, p. 210.

currently reported this forenoon that the Bhurtpoor Raja had actually taken the field against us."¹⁴ "At the battle of Dig," remarks Thorn, "he acted with a treachery scarcely to be paralleled even in the history of Indian alliances."¹⁵ It is to be noted that after this battle, the garrison in the fortress of Dig - composed entirely of the forces of Ranjit Singh - sheltered Harnath Singh's men. Therefore, Lake concluded that the commencement^{of} war against the Raja of Bharatpur was 'indispensable not only as the most effectual means of extinguishing the remnant of Holkar's power but in the way of example to other states.'¹⁶ He wrote to Lord Wellesley on December 8, 1804: "I think the ingratitude, the treachery and villanous behaviour of the Bhurtpoor Raja merit every misfortune that can be heaped upon him. It is impossible to express the mildness of my conduct to the man....."¹⁷

Lake left Mathura on the 1st December, 1804, with the intention of laying siege to the fortress of Dig and next day encamped at Khierahsamy near Dig.¹⁸ Here he remained for nine days and moved out repeatedly to reconnoitre the country. On one such occasion Jaswant Rao Holkar with his cavalry fell on the rear of Lake's column. But as the latter opened fire with grape, he made off losing sixty men. On Lake's side, ten Indian troopers were wounded and one killed.¹⁹ Col. Don with the battering train from Agra joined Lake at 'Khierahsamy.' On the 11th December, 1804, the army of Lake moved on in two columns in the compact form of an oblong square protected on all

14. Pester, War and Sport in India, p.339.

15. Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, p.405.

16. Ibid., p.406.

17. Martin, Wellesley's Despatches, Vol. IV, p.258.

18. Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, p.406.

19. Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, p.406; Duff, Vol. II, p.290.

sides by picquets and strengthened by a regiment of cavalry. Several futile attempts were made by Holkar's cavalry to break in upon the army. On the 13th of the same month Lake took up a final position before the fortress of Dig. He dislodged Holkar's men from the plain chosen for his encampment and made vigorous preparations for the commencement of the siege.²⁰

2. The Fall of Dig.

Dig in the early decade of nineteenth century was a flourishing town²¹ of considerable size situated 23 miles to the north-west of Bharatpur.²² It has been mentioned in Skanda Puran as Dirgha or Dhirghapur. Dig was surrounded by marshes and lakes and was defended by a strong mud wall with bastions and a deep ditch all round except at that angle which terminated in a high rocky mount called the Shah Burj. The fort was situated in the centre of the town. It was strongly built, was in good repairs and had sufficient guns. The towers were of considerable height and the gateways massive. Near the fort stood the palace of the Raja of Bharatpur. Adjoining the palace was a beautiful lake.²³

Lake began his operations of the siege of Dig at 11 O'clock on the night of the 13th December, 1804. The reserve of his army, under the command of Col. Don, took possession of a large grove without firing a shot. He considered it a good base for carrying the approaches of the fort. Possessed of this grove the pioneers under Captain

20. Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, p.407.

21. Pester, War and Sport in India, p.343.

22. Brockman, A Gazetteer of Eastern Rajputana, p.10.

23. Ibid.

Swinton and Lt. Forrest immediately broke ground and completed a trench of three hundred yards long and a mortar battery before sunrise. They got all help from the engineer Captain Robinson. The cavalry had been kept ready for the emergency all night.²⁴

Towards the evening of the 14th December the volunteer parties from the King's Dragoon regiments commenced the breaching battery within 750 yards of the Shah Burj and completed it on the night of the 16th in spite of constant firing from Jaswant's matchlockmen. Next morning Lake opened a brisk cannonade from six eighteen pounders, four twelvers, and four mortars. It continued for several days but without success.²⁵ According to Mohan Singh, the fort of Dig 'contained powder and grain in such huge quantities as to serve the needs of year after year of war.'²⁶ No wonder then that Holkar's men kept up a smart fire. Lake erected another battery consisting of three eighteen pounders on the night of the 20th December, 1804, and at last succeeded in making a practicable breach.²⁷

Lake was determined to deliver an assault on the night of 23rd December. He divided the storming party into three columns. The right under Captain Kelly, consisting of 4 battalion companies of the Company's European Regiment and five companies of the first battalion of the 12th regiment of native infantry, was ordered to carry, the enemies batteries and trenches on the high ground near the Shah Burj. The left column under Major Radcliffe, consisting of four battalion companies of the Company's European Regiment and five of the first battalion of the 12th regiment of native infantry was ordered to carry

24. Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, p.408.

25. Ibid., Owen, A Selection of Wellesley's Despatches, p.501.

26. Wajai-Holkar, f. 159a.

27. Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, p.409.

the trenches and batteries on the enemy's right. The centre column led by Lt. Col. Macrae, consisting of the flank companies of His Majesty's twentysecond, seventy sixth and those of Company's European regiments and of the first battalion of the eighth⁺ regiment of native infantry, composed the main storming party for the breach. The columns reached the different points of attack a little before twelve at night.²⁸

Harnath Singh was on patrol duty that night and 'he was overcome by sleep and neglect of watchfulness.'²⁹ His men, however, opened a most galling fire of cannon and musketry. Both sides exchanged heavy gunfire. By 2 O'clock in the morning of the 24th December, Lake was in possession of the Shah Burj.³⁰ Diwan Rai Singh, Lachman Singh and Baryar Singh, having failed to stand against the storming party, took to flight.³¹ In the afternoon of the 24th December the second brigade of cavalry under Lt. Col. Browne fell in with Jaswant Rao's cavalry on the way to Bharatpur. During the night the defence of Dig was given up and on the Christmas morning of 1804, Lake was in complete possession of the fortress, the principal part of Holkar's artillery,³² two lakhs of rupees and a large quantity of grain. Lt. Col. Macrae, Major Radcliffe, Captain Kelly, Lt. Col. Ball, Captain

28. Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, p.409; Owen, A Selection of Wellesley's Despatches, p.501.

29. Waqai-Holkar, f. 158b.

30. Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, p.410.

31. Waqai-Holkar, f. 158b. Kuen is wrong in stating that Ranjit Singh was in the fort of Dig at that time. (Narrative of Kuen, f.35b.)

32. According to Thorn, the number of guns taken from Holkar was one hundred of which sixteen were brass ones. The others were of iron and of different calibre from 70 to 60 pounders and from 28 downwards (p.413.)

Raban, Captain Lindsay, Captain Robertson, Lt. Smith, Col. Horsford and some officers of the corps of engineers distinguished themselves in the siege of Dig.³³

The loss on Holkar's side was very heavy.³⁴ The numbers of killed and wounded on British side amounted to forty three and one hundred eighty four respectively.³⁵ "Our loss on the 23rd", writes Pester, "was very severe, but did not exceed what might have been expected from the nature of attack."³⁶ The list of casualties is given in Appendix C.

Lake celebrated the Christmas of the year of 1804 with the capture of Dig which raised him to the pinnacle of military renown. What he achieved was remarkable, but should not be forgotten that Lake's success was due to the fact that his opponent had no experience of standing a siege. The Fall of Dig encouraged Lake to believe that his army could achieve similar success against other forts - and this belief unfortunately soon landed him in trouble.³⁷ Lake, full of dreams of creating a spectacular effect by knocking out the enemy by a series of smashing blows and brilliant marches, failed to take note of his limitations. He 'was a mere soldier with many of the prejudices of his class, plain spoken, straightforward and thoroughly a man of honour. He had no small contempt for civilians and pen men. "D-n your writing, mind your fighting" was the exhortation which he blurted out in the language of the camp."³⁸

33. Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, p.411; Pearse, Memoir of the Life and Military Services of Lake, p.351.

34. Waqai-Holkar, f. 158b.

35. Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, p.412.

36. Pester, War and Sport in India, p.373.

37. Pearse, Memoir of the Life and Military Services of Lake, p.351.

38. Sardesai, New History of the Marathas, Vol. III, p.434.

Appendix C

Thorn gives the names of the following officers in Lake's army who were killed and wounded during the siege of Dig.

Killed: (1) Captain Young - H.M. the 8th Regiment, Native Infantry.
 (2) Lt. Boyer - H.M. the 12th Regiment, Native Infantry.

Wounded: (1) Lt. Smith - Artillery.

(2) Captain Lindsay)	
(3) Captain MC' Night)	
(4) Lt. Sweetenham.)	H.M. 22nd Regiment.
(5) Lt. Cresswell)	
(6) Captain Scott - H.M. the 76th Regiment.		
(7) Lt. Merriman - Company's European Regiment.		
(8) Lt. Col. Ball.)	
(9) Lt. Col. Basseit.)	First Battalion 8th Regiment
(10) Lt. Abernethy.)	Native Infantry.
(11) Lt. Anderson.)	
(12) Captain Swinton)	
(13) Lt. Forrest)	Corps of Pioneers.

CHAPTER XIII

The Siege of Bharatpur

1. The alliance between Jaswant Rao Holkar and Ranjit Singh, the Raja of Bharatpur.

The Jat kingdom of Bharatpur was one of the Eastern Rajputana States which lay between latitude $26^{\circ}43''$ and $27^{\circ}50''$ and longitudes $76^{\circ}54''$ and $77^{\circ}49''$ with extreme length and breadth of 76 and 48 miles respectively and an area of 1974.79 square miles.¹ It was bounded on the north by the Gurgaon district of the Punjab, on the east by the Mathura and Agra Districts, on the south by Dholpur and Karauli and on the south-west by Jaipur and on the west by Alwar. In the winter of 1804 began the siege of the citadel of Bharatpur by Lake in which the Jats put up a long and brave defence that has hardly a parallel in the history of Modern India.²

The land in Bharatpur territory is usually flat and fertile. The southern portion of the state is hilly and much intersected by ravines called the 'Dang'. At Baretha and Bansi Paharpur on these hills, there are quarries of white and red sandstone. Bharatpur, the capital of the Jat kingdom, is situated on a low-lying ground at the confluence of the rivers Ruparel and Banganga. The waters of Ruparel were stored in the Motijheel Bund, about a mile due north of the city, while those of the Banganga being brought from the Ajan Bund to the Atal Bund furnished the moat around the fort. The kings of Bharatpur took advantage of the low-lying position of the citadel in time of war. Bharatpur was only a small mud fort in the 16th

1. Brockman, A Gazetteer of Eastern Rajputana, p.7.

2. Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, p.415.

century founded by Rustam, a Jat of the Cograya clan. In 1773 Suraj Mal wrested it from Khem Karan, a descendant of Rustam and built the large fort and works around the city. The fort of Bharatpur had impregnable stone-walls. It was doubly fortified against any attack by allowing the water in the bunds or hills to pour into the ditch. Lake was not aware of this secret. According to Brockmann, this was the main cause of the failure of Lake's efforts in the siege of Bharatpur.³

After the fall of Dig, Ranjit Singh - the Raja of Bharatpur - found 'the business of war poised on the point of a spear.'⁴ If Basawan Lal is to be believed, he sent an envoy 'to make humble excuses, representing to General Lake, that, he was now the master of all Hindoostan, and would lose nothing in reputation by passing over his fortress, but on the contrary would gain credit by dealing liberally with him. General Lake, however, would not hear of such a thing as forgiveness.'⁵ It is to be noted that this statement of Basawan Lal is corroborated by the Narrative of Kuen. Kuen writes that Ranjit Singh sent his envoy Sha^{fr}ji to Lake apologising for his conduct. Lake dismissed the envoy with the message that Ranjit Singh should prepare himself for fighting⁶ the English.

At this time Jaswant Rao Holkar was encamped at Kumbher and probably had a skirmish with the English. A news-letter in the Selections from Peshwa Daftar communicates the reverses and the severe loss which the British sustained at the hands of Jaswant Rao Holkar.⁷

3. Brockman, A Gazetteer of Eastern Rajputana, p.7.

4. Waqai-Holkar, f.161b.

5. Basawan Lal, Tr., p.233.

6. Narrative of Kuen, f.36a.

7. Selections from Peshwa Daftar, Vol. XXXI, 37 "भाघ जुगा २ कुंभारनजौक

इंग्रजाची व होलकराची लढाई जाली। त्यास इंग्रज सिकस्त होउन काटो पाच सात पल्लखे मारली गेली।"

This skirmish has not been mentioned either by Mohan Singh or Basawan Lal. With nearly 10,000 horsemen, Jaswant passed his days subsisting on plunder between Fatehpur and Mathura. His other commanders such as Murtaza Khan, Najib Khan, Shahid Khan and Harnath Singh took their families out of the fort of Bharatpur and marched to the tank of Cheri (Talcheri). Harnath Singh levied Rs. 8,000 as contribution from Hindaun and set out for Mahaser towards Khushalgarh.⁸ Ranjit Singh, anticipating Lake's attack on Bharatpur wrote to Jaswant Rao, "All these troubles have come down on my head for your sake, and you are now withdrawing to a distance, your troops have deserted you and my enemies are planning to capture my fort. If you consider this sort of act as proper for friendly relations and alliances in observing which by God's Grace, I have not been the least remiss - it does not matter. Be it so; But this sort of conduct is unworthy of the duties of a king and general."⁹ Jaswant sent the following reply, "Lack of pay makes soldiers withdraw their hearts from a master's service. If some money is paid from your treasury as aid for the expenses of my army, I shall not hesitate to fight for you to the death."¹⁰

Ranjit Singh 'girt his loins for fighting'.¹¹ His chiefs vowed not to yield the fort so long as they lived. At first he thought of sending his wives to Jodhpur or Jaipur for asylum, while he would defend the fort. The Ranis wept and objected to the proposal saying, "Our family has never done this and shall never seek refuge with others."¹²

8. Waqai-Holkar, f. 161a.

9. Ibid., ff. 161a-161b.

10. Ibid., f. 161b.

11. Narrative of Kuen, f. 36a.

12. Ibid.

Ranjit Singh, therefore, began vigorous preparations for defending the citadel. As he agreed to pay Jaswant Rao Holkar twentyfive thousand of rupees daily, the latter recalled Harnath Singh and other officers who were in the neighbourhood and promptly marched to Bharatpur.¹³ It was agreed upon that Ranjit Singh would defend the fort from inside and Holkar would harass the besiegers outside the fort.¹⁴ According to one of the news-reports, Daulat Rao Sindhia also expressed his wish to join Jaswant Rao Holkar and the Raja of Bharatpur in their struggle against the British; but he was requested by Holkar to move on towards Ujjain.¹⁵ Raghuji Bhosle too appeared to be sympathetic towards Holkar and gave Elphinstone, the Resident at Nagpur, every reason to suspect his fidelity after August, 1804. About the beginning of October of the same year Mir Khan sent a yakil to him charged with the following demands.¹⁶

1. Raghuji Bhosle should send an army to cooperate with Jaswant Rao Holkar.
2. He should give financial assistance to Holkar.
3. If Bhosle would not fight against the English, he should demand the restoration of Berar from the Company.

Mir Khan's demands made Raghuji Bhosle lukewarm to support the Holkar's cause. After the reverses of Jaswant Rao Holkar at Dig and Farrukhabad, Bhosle gave up his hostile designs against the Company.¹⁷

13. Waqai-Holkar, f. 161b.

14. Holkaranchi Kaifyat, p.102.

15. S.P.D. XXXI, 37.

16. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. V, p.109. Letter of Elphinstone to Close, 28th January, 1805.

17. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. V, Letter No.75.

2. The Siege of Bharatpur in January, 1805.

Lake marched from Dig on the 28th December, 1804,¹⁸ to Bharatpur in order 'to cut off Holkar's only asylum.'¹⁹ "The commencement of war against the Raja of Bharatpur was indispensable not only as the most effectual means of extinguishing the remnant of Holkar's power but in the way of example to other states"²⁰ On the 31st December, Lake was joined by Major General Dowdeswell with His Majesty's 75th Regiment and a supply of necessary stores. The march to Bharatpur was somewhat tedious. On the 2nd January, 1805, Lake passed by Kumbher and encamped near Bharatpur for prosecuting the siege. He lost no time in opening the trenches. On the evening of the 4th, a party under Lt. Col. Maitland occupied a grove, considerably in advance of Lake's camp and advantageously situated for favouring the approaches. The following night a breaching battery was erected.²¹ With the approach of Lake's army Ranjit Singh flooded the ditch round the fort with the water of the lake.²²

In the morning of the 7th January, 1805,²³ Lake's heavy guns began to batter the walls of Bharatpur near the Kumbher Gate.²⁴ About noon another battery of four eight-inch mortars and four of five and a half-inch mortars opened fire. Ranjit Singh's men

18. Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, p.415. According to Sardesai, Lake arrived at Bharatpur on the 19th December, 1804 (New History of the Marathas, Vol. III, p.428.)

19. Duff, Vol. II, p.291.

20. Pester, War and Sport in India, p.347.

21. Thorn, pp.415-416.

22. Waqai-Holkar, f. 162a.

23. Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, p.416; Mill, Vol. VI, p.423.

24. Narrative of Kuen, f. 37b.

too kept up a smart fire till the afternoon of the 9th January, 1805. Lake succeeded in making a practicable breach in the wall and was determined to deliver an assault the same night to prevent the enemy from stockading the breach.²⁵ According to Kuen Ranjit Singh during the fighting used to go out of the fort in disguise at night, worship Giriraj, give alms to the beggars and then return to the fort.²⁶

Lake formed a bold plan for the night assault on the 9th January. He divided the storming party in three columns. Lt. Col. Ryan with one hundred and fifty Europeans and a battalion of sepoys was ordered to attempt a gateway on the left of Lake's battery. Major Hawkes with two companies of the 75th Regiment and another battalion of sepoys was to carry the advance guns of the enemy on its right. The centre column was commanded by Lt. Col. Maitland. It consisted of the flank companies of the 22nd, 75th and 76th regiments and of the Company's European regiment totalling about 500 men with a battalion of sepoys. Maitland's task was to take the enemy by surprise and get in to the breach.²⁷ The night was dark and the ground was full of swamps and pools. Many soldiers of the centre column lost their way and some followed the left column and some the right. The 22nd flankers, led by Lt. Manser, crossed the ditch, which had breast deep water and mounted up the breach. Being only 23 in number, they could not possibly storm the enemy's guns on the bastions to the right and left of them. So Lt. Manser caused his men to sit down in the breach, while he went out in search of the rest of the column. Meanwhile, Major Hawkes and

25. Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, p.416.

26. Narrative of Kuen, f.37a.

27. Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, p.417; Owen, A Selection of Wellesley's Despatches, p.546, Lt. General Lake to Marquess Wellesley, January 10, 1805.

Col. Ryan after performing their tasks were returning to the support of the centre. The well-directed fire of grape from inside the fort replied the vigorous attack by Col. Maitland. The few flankers of the 22nd, having their officers Lts. Sweetman and Creswell wounded and finding no hope of support, were drawn off from the breach.²⁸ The troops suffered most when they were returning to their trenches. The havoc was appalling. Forty three Europeans and fortytwo Indian sepoys fell dead and the wounded numbered three hundred seventy one. Many of the wounded men being unavoidably left behind were most cruelly murdered. Among the officers killed were Col. Maitland, Captain John Wallace, Lt. Glubb, Lt. Percival and Ensign Waterhouse. Those wounded were Major Campbell, Captains Hessman and Brutton; Lts. Byne, Tully, MC'Lachlan, Mathewson and Ensign Hatfield, Cosgrove, Sweetman, Cresswell, Wood, Hamilton, Browne, Sharpe, Baker; Captains Webner, O'Donnell and Fletcher and Major Gregory.²⁹ The surprise attack ended in a dismal failure owing to the vigilance of the garrison.³⁰ According to Kuen, Akhi Singh Purohit and Captain Sebastian played the most gallant role in repulsing the British attack.³¹

Lake now resolved to make an attempt³² against another part of the wall, a little more to the right. He constructed an additional battery of two twenty-fourers and four eighteen pounders in that direction. On the 16th January, 1805, Lake's additional battery opened a very heavy fire and with some effect. Randhir Singh, the eldest son of Ranjit Singh, was wounded in the arm. Next morning

28. Duff, Vol. II, p.295; Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, p.418.

29. Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, pp.418-419.

30. Waqai-Holkar, f. 162b.

31. Narrative of Kuen, f. 37b.

32. Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, p.419. According to Mohan Singh another assault was attempted on the 11th January (Waqai-Holkar, f. 162b.)

as the brother of Ranjit Singh descended a little way down the breach, he was shot down by Captain Nelly.³³ He was curious to inspect the bodies of men who had been killed in previous action. On the 18th January, 1805, Major General Smith with three battalions of sepoys belonging to the garrison of Agra and one hundred convalescent Europeans in all about 1600 men arrived in Lake's camp. After some time Ismail Beg, who had been formerly a partisan of Holkar, also arrived with about five hundred cavalry. Meanwhile, a large and useful breach was effected and the batteries of Lake kept up an incessant fire till the 21st January. Ranjit Singh's men began to pour showers of grape by drawing themselves behind the parapets. Lake realised the necessity of having an exact knowledge of the breadth and depth of the ditch opposite the breach. This risky task was undertaken by a havildar and two privates belonging to the third regiment of native cavalry. They disguised themselves in Indian dress and sallied out on their horses about 3 O'clock in the afternoon of the 21st January. They were pursued as deserters by a party of Lake's sepoys firing blank catridges after them. The havildar entreated the people on the walls to show the way into the city. The enemy, without suspecting, readily pointed out the way to one of the gates. The havildar and his men rode along the side of the ditch, passed the breach, made the necessary observations and successfully galloped back again full speed towards the trenches. According to their report, the breach was easy to be ascended and the ditch neither very broad nor deep.³⁴

Lake was determined to make a second assault on Bharatpur on 21st January. He selected the following parties for storming - 150 men

33. Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, pp.419-420; Owen, A Selection of Wellesley's Despatches, p.517.

34. Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, pp.423-424.

of the 76th, 120 men of the 75th and 100 men of the 1st European regiments and 50 men of 22 flankers headed by Captain Lindsay. Lake kept his cavalry in readiness to attack Jaswant Rao Holkar whose task was to harass the besiegers from outside the fort.³⁵ Ranjit Singh was paying Re. one in eight days to Holkar's infantry and Rs. 15 per month to his cavalry.³⁶

At three O'clock in the afternoon of the 21st January, Lake's batteries began to open fire. It was found that the Jats had dammed up the ditch below the breach and caused a large body of water that had been kept above it to be poured in. The ditch was naturally widened and deepened almost instantaneously. Lake's portable bridges carried by his picked men proved too shot for that purpose. Several men, including Lt. Morris, swam across and mounted the breach. Col. Macre, however, finding his task impracticable made a hasty retreat to the trenches. Ranjit Singh's men began to plough the British soldiers with grape-shot and bullet. The loss of the storming party was heavy. The number of casualties amounted to five hundred and ninety one. Among the officers killed were Lts. Macrae, Bland, Thomas M'Gregor. The wounded officers were Captains Lindsay and William Hessman, Lts. Thomas Grant, John Craig, Templeton, James Macras, Bright, Manser, Towers, Addison, Watson, Day, Pallock, Galloway, Morris and Watson.³⁷ Though a great master of war, Lake committed a great mistake by underrating the sturdy Jats of Bharatpur. In spite of heavy casualties, the situation not at all improved from British point of view.

35. Thorn, *Memoir of the War in India*, p. 425. Owen, *A Selection of Wellesley's Despatches*, p. 547.

36. *Waqai-Holkar*, f. 162b.

37. Thorn, *Memoir of the War in India*, p. 425.

3. Mir Khan's arrival at Bharatpur.

According to Thorn, the Raja of Bharatpur knew that there was little chance of his being able to hold out for long against the superiority of British arms. Therefore, he requested Mir Khan, who was then in Bundelkhand, to hasten to Bharatpur and sent six lakhs of rupees for that purpose.³⁸ Mohan Singh writes that Mir Khan arrived at Bharatpur in response to Jaswant Rao Holkar's call with 25,000 Pindara horse and 15,000 troopers.³⁹ When Jaswant Rao requested Ranjit Singh to assign a daily subsidy to Mir Khan, the reply was: "All these hard troubles are due to you. I have not derived as much benefit as was possible. It is better that you should remain content with the subsidy already fixed."⁴⁰ Basawan Lal too writes that during the siege of Bharatpur, Jaswant Rao wrote to Mir Khan to come to his help.⁴¹ Mir Khan crossed the Chambal at Dholpur where he met Muhammad Khan Afridi with an 'offer of 18 lakhs in territory' from Lake.⁴² The offer was refused by Mir Khan. As he advanced from Dholpur to a place about 40 miles from Bharatpur, Jaswant Rao sent Ghulam Khan to him with a lakh of rupees and with 'many excuses for the past.'⁴³ Later on Jaswant Rao himself met Mir Khan near Fatehpur Sikri. Basawan Lal also writes that the Raja of Bharatpur agreed to pay Mir Khan ten lakhs of rupees and a settlement was made to that effect.⁴⁴

38. Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, p.421.

39. Waqai-Holkar, f. 163a.

40. Ibid.

41. Basawan Lal, Tr., p.233.

42. Ibid., p.239.

43. Ibid., p.240.

44. Ibid., p.243.

Mir Khan was in a spirit of exaltation. Having arrived at Bharatpur, he boastfully said to Jaswant Rao, "that the war has not been decided inspite of your having such a vast force is a cause of distraction. God willing, in one moment the banner of victory will be uplifted. You may have heard of the bravery shown by my troops in Bundelkhand."⁴⁵ On the 21st January, 1805, the British cavalry regiments with their artillery were drawn out into two lines to attack the cavalry of Jaswant Rao and Mir Khan.⁴⁶ Mohan Singh writes that Mir Khan was 'welcomed as newly arrived guests with the hospitable present of grape and cannon-balls.'⁴⁷ The cavalry of Holkar and Mir Khan fled away after suffering the loss of fifty troopers killed in action. Basawan Lal as usual puts all the blame on Holkar. He remarks that Mir Khan wanted to surround the British cavalry on all sides but received no cooperation from Jaswant Rao Holkar.⁴⁸

It appears that one of the tasks assigned by Ranjit Singh to Jaswant Rao Holkar and Mir Khan was to capture the convoys of provisions on their way to Lake's camp.⁴⁹ On the 22nd January, a British convoy consisting of 12 thousand bullocks guarded by a small body of matchlockmen was coming from Mathura to Lake's camp. For its protection Lake detached the first regiment of native cavalry and the first battalion of the 15th regiment under the command of Captain Walsh. Mir Khan lay in wait for the convoy near Kumbher and in the morning of the 23rd January fell on the convoy and the detachment. The British detachment numbering no more than 14 hundred were inadequate to cover twelve thousand bullocks and hence took post in a

45. Waqai-Holkar, f.163a.

46. Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, p.425.

47. Waqai-Holkar, f.163b.

48. Basawan Lal, Tr., p.242.

49. Ibid., p.243; Holkaranchi Kaifyat, p.102.

nearby village⁵⁰ about two miles from the camp of Lake.⁵¹ They defended themselves bravely with their musketry and field pieces. Mir Khan and Bapu Sindhia made a desperate push and succeeded in capturing a part of the village.⁵² On hearing the firing of the cannon, Lt. Col. Need with the 27th dragoons and the second regiment of native cavalry rushed towards the village and recovered the guns that Mir Khan had captured. According to Thorn, Mir Khan lost 600 troopers and having stripped himself of his clothes and arms, he mixed with other fugitives and made a precipitate retreat.⁵³ During this contest the principal loss of British convoy and detachment amounted to eight sepoy killed and thirty six wounded. Among the wounded were Lt. Gordon and Col. Erskine.⁵⁴ About 400 bullocks⁵⁵ laden with grain went astray and fell in the way of Mir Khan's cavalry and were goaded on by their lances, some in the direction of Bharatpur and others towards Kumher.⁵⁶ Basawan Lal writes that Ranjit Singh, who was much impressed by 'the bravery and good conduct' of Mir Khan, congratulated him on his success.⁵⁷

On the 24th January Lake sent a detachment consisting of the 29th light dragoons, two corps of native cavalry, with three battalions of sepoy for the protection of a convoy of supplies coming from Agra.⁵⁸ The detachment reached Agra on the 26th January and set out with the convoy after two days. The convoy consisted of

50. Thorn, *Memoir of the War in India*, p.426.

51. Basawan Lal, *Tr.*, p.243.

52. Thorn, *Memoir of the War in India*, p.426.

53. *Ibid.*, pp. 426-427.

54. *Ibid.*, p.427.

55. Waqai-Holkar, f. 163b.

56. Thorn, *Memoir of the War in India*, p.427.

57. Basawan Lal, *Tr.*, p.245.

58. Thorn, *Memoir of the War in India*, p.428. According to Basawan Lal (*Tr.*, p.246) and Mohan Singh (f.164a) the convoy was coming from Mathura.

50 thousand bullocks carrying grain, 800 hakries laden with stores and ammunition, 8000 rounds of 18 pound shot and six lakhs of rupees. Mir Khan, Bapu Sindhia and Harnath Singh with the whole strength of their cavalry marched along the Mathura road to intercept the convoy about midway. As the spies brought the report of the movements of Mir Khan, Lake collected all the remaining cavalry in his camp and with two corps of infantry hurried to rescue the convoy. Thorn writes, "The cavalry of the confederates were still formidable in numbers but their timidity was manifest in shunning an encounter with the force under General Lake, so that the two corps joined without the loss of a man...."⁵⁹ On the 29th January, Lake encamped at Wer and next day resumed his march. Mohan Singh refers to a 'drawn battle' in which both sides fought heroically. Of the army of Jaswant Rao Holkar who was also present during the skirmish, 125 horses were slain and a large number of men killed and yet not a single bullock of the grain-convoy was captured.⁶⁰ Basawan Lal's account is entirely different. According to him, Mir Khan knew that Lake would immediately move out when he would learn that the former was off for the convoy. So Mir Khan advised Jaswant Rao to attack Lake's camp in the meantime. But Jaswant Rao, to Mir Khan's great disappointment, marched along the Mathura road to attack the convoy.⁶¹ Here he made little impression by skirmishing and irregular attacks. Mir Khan was in favour of making a desperate charge. But Jaswant Rao forbade him saying, "The enemy is now cautious and has formed a square in preparations against such an attempt. The attack would be ill-timed and a mere wastage of courage and life."⁶² When Holkar returned to Bharatpur,

59. Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, p.428.

60. Waqai-Holkar, ff. 165a-165b.

61. Basawan Lal, Tr., p.247.

62. Ibid., p.248.

Ranjit Singh said, "What a wonder, with such a strong force, you could not cut off the enemy; What will be your success in other things?"⁶³ From the above narratives it is quite evident that Jaswant Rao fought only skirmishes and never made any attempt to break the battalions of Lake with a desperate charge.

Early in February Ranjit Singh sent for Jaswant Rao and Mir Khan and said, "As both Sardars could not act well together in the same field, it would be better that one should remain at Bharatpur, while the other head an incursion into the enemy's territory and carried the war thither."⁶⁴ Mir Khan crossed the Jumna on the 7th February, 1805, and began his roving campaign in Rohilkhand. Next day Lake sent the cavalry consisting of the 8th, 27th, 29th regiments of light dragoons and the first, third and sixth regiments of native cavalry with the horse artillery under Major General Smith in close pursuit of Mir Khan.⁶⁵ Mir Khan ranged over the country far and near - being reported at such places as Bastinagar, Saraswatipur, Jalalpur, Amroha, Pilibhit, Rudrapur, Tejpur, Moradabad, Thakurdwara, Tanda, Sambhal, Ferozpur, Alipur (3 koss from Sambhal), Kanaut and was back again to Bharatpur in the third week of March, 1805.⁶⁶ Mir Khan roamed about the country, never standing up to an open fight except near Afzalpur on the 1st March, 1805, levying contributions, plundering and burning the villages.⁶⁷ Major General Smith, ably assisted by Skinner and other officers gave a relentless pursuit to Mir Khan. Thorn remarks, "It merits remark in this place that the Bengal

63. Waqai-Holkar, f. 165b.

64. Basawan Lal, Tr., p.248.

65. Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, p.431; Duff, Vol II, p.294.

66. Basawan Lal, Tr., pp.250-264; Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, pp. 431-447; Asiatic Annual Register, 1806, p.6.

67. Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, p.439.

Cavalry, through the campaign, endured trials and hardships almost surpassing conception and such as astonished even our most active enemies."⁶⁸ In this roving campaign several principal sardars of Mir Khan such as Shahamat Khan, Rahmat Khan and Ghulam Ali Khan were wounded and many troopers left his service. The campaign was a dismal failure.

4. The Siege of Bharatpur (February - April, 1805).

Hardships and failures had no effect upon unshakable confidence of Lake. On the 10th February he was reinforced by a division of the Bombay army under Major General Jones. This division consisted of four battalions of sepoys, His Majesty's 86th Regiment and 8 companies of 65th regiment with a troop of Bombay Cavalry and about five hundred irregular horse. The Bombay force was anxious to take part in the siege; but the Bengal troops requested Lake that they might be allowed to finish the operations. Lake, animated by the enthusiasm of the soldiers, decided to carry on regular trenches and form batteries within 400 yards of the fort.⁶⁹

On the 20th February the storming party was ordered to the trenches at daybreak to be in readiness for the attack as soon as the stockades made in the breach during the night should have been knocked off again.⁷⁰ Next day in the morning, Muhammad Shah Khan and Abdul, the officers of Holkar, made a sortie.⁷¹ The 22nd flankers

68. Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, p.447.

69. Ibid; p.450; Duff, Vol. II, p.295; Owen, A Selection of Wellesley's Despatches, p.519.

70. Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, p.450.

71. Waqai-Holkar, f. 166b; Holkaranchi Kaifyat, p.102.

under Lt. Wilson bayonetted the assailants and compelled them to fly in the utmost disorder.⁷² The fugitives were pursued upto the very gate of the fort. Mohan Singh writes, "On our side soldiers beyond count were slain and two guns were lost."⁷³

About half-past three in the afternoon of the same day Lake began the attack. The storming party under Lt. Col. Don was formed of the principal portion of the European force in the Bengal army and three battalions of sepoys. One column, consisting of 200 men of the 86th Regiment from the Bombay Division and the first battalion of the Eighth Regiment of Bengal infantry under the command of Captain Grant was ordered to carry the enemy's trenches and their guns on the outside of the town; whilst a third column, composed of three hundred men of the 65th Regiment and two battalions of Bombay Sepoys were to attack the Bhim Narayan Gate.⁷⁴ Lake himself was to attack from the Wer Gate side and Jones from the Mathura Gate side.⁷⁵ It was arranged that the storming party should be preceded by fifty men carrying the fasciners which they were to throw over the ditch and keep up a fire, while others were to cross over and ascend the breach.⁷⁶ The plan could not be carried out due to the vigilance of the garrison and heavy discharge of grape. Ranjit Singh was at that time personally keeping watch on all sides⁷⁷ and baffled all the attempts of the storming party. The column under Captain Grant captured eleven of the enemy's guns. Col. Don's soldiers displayed reckless ^{courage} which can even be called foolhardiness under the circumstances in which they were

72. Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, p.451.

73. Waqai-Holkar, f. 167a.

74. Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, p.451.

75. Waqai-Holkar, f. 167b.

76. Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, p. 452.

77. Waqai-Holkar, f. 168a.

placed. Lake gave an order for return to camp. In a single day he suffered enormous loss amounting to 49 Europeans and 113 Indian sepoys killed and 176 Europeans and 556 sepoys wounded, in all 894.⁷⁸ The rest of the details are given in Appendix D.

Lake stood his ground manfully against odds which would have disheartened any other man. In order to retrieve his fame he renewed the storm on the 21st February though he was suffering acutely for want of supplies. The same morning Lake's battering guns made a large gap at the bottom of the bastion on the right side of the fort. The storming party moved on to the attack about 3 O'clock in the afternoon under the command of Bregadier Monson. The storming party consisted of the whole European force, two battalions of native infantry of the Bengal army, the greater part of the 65th and 86th regiments, the grenadier battalion and the flank companies belonging to the first battalion of the third regiment of the Bombay Division.⁷⁹ The storming party made a gallant and reckless charge. Several soldiers drove their bayonets into the walls, one above the other and tried to reach the top but were knocked down by various missiles. Others in vain tried to get up by the shot-holes made here and there on the wall. Lt. Templeton, a gallant young officer, was killed just as he had planted the colours near the summit.⁸⁰ The well-served guns of Ranjit Singh showered grape and murderous volleys like a torrent on the storming party. Col. Monson gave up the attempt after two hours' desperate efforts. The British loss amounted to 69 Europeans and 56 sepoys killed; 410 Europeans and 452 sepoys wounded, in all about 927. The rest of the details are given in Appendix E.

78. Thorn, *Memoir of the War in India*, p.453; Owen, *A Selection of Wellesley's Despatches*, pp.548-549, Letter of Lt. General Lake to Marquess Wellesley, February 21, 1805.

79. Thorn, *Memoir of the War in India*, p.455.

80. *Ibid.*, p.456.

After the failure of the attempt on 21st February, Lake no more wanted the effusion of unnecessary blood. He converted the siege into a blockade and removed the army to a fresh spot to the north-east of Bharatpur.⁸¹ Ranjit Singh did not want to prolong the war as nothing could be expected from Jaswant Rao Holkar and Mir Khan. He intimated his desire for peace and sent his vakils to Lake's camp on the 10th March, 1805. Lake was now willing to accept the offer of peace. His battering guns were useless; all his heavy shot had been completely exhausted and nearly $\frac{1}{3}$ of his officers and men were either killed or wounded.⁸² Lake also realised that with the approaching summer the severity of hot winds would tell adversely on the health of his soldiers.⁸³ The rumour of Sindhia's advance towards Bharatpur was an additional inducement for the uncompromising Lake to come to an honourable reconciliation with Ranjit Singh.⁸⁴ Above all, Lake was ordered by Lord Wellesley not to resume the siege of Bharatpur at the risk of failure.⁸⁵ At last the treaty was concluded on the 10th April, 1805. By this Treaty Ranjit Singh paid twenty lakhs of 'Farrukhabad rupees', renounced his alliance with the enemies of British Government and his claim to advantages secured by the former treaty with Lake. The fortress of Dig was to remain with the English. It was agreed upon that a son of Ranjit Singh was to reside with the commanding officer of the British forces in suburbs of Agra and Delhi.⁸⁶

81. Thorn, *Memoir of the War in India*, p.453.

82. Pester, *War and Sport in India*, p.392.

83. Mill, Vol. VI, p.429.

84. Pester, *War and Sport in India*, p.392; Duff, Vol. II, p.298.

85. Owen, *A Selection of Wellesley's Despatches*, p.551, Letter of Lord Wellesley to Lake, 9th March, 1805.

86. *Asiatic Annual Register*, 1806, p.8; Duff, Vol. II, p.298; Thorn, *Memoir of the War in India*, p.464.

The treaty of Bharatpur from the British point of view was an honourable settlement though obtained at a heavy cost. In the siege of Bharatpur 3,203 men were killed and wounded on the British side, of whom 103 were European officers.⁸⁷ Officers like Skinner, however, consoled themselves with the thought that 'a timely submission alone saved Ranjit Singh from the fate of his allies.'⁸⁸ Wrote Munro, "We cannot expect that we are to carry on war without meeting any disaster and that it should be quite a holiday work."⁸⁹ There can be no doubt that Bharatpur had given a serious blow to British prestige. Fraser remarks, "Bharatpur continued for long to be a taunt and reproach to us in Upper India."⁹⁰ The failure of the siege of Bharatpur had something to do with the sudden recall of Wellesley in July, 1805, by the Court of Directors. Under the pressure of Lord Wellesley's forward policy the debt of the Company increased from 17 millions in 1797 to 31 millions in 1806. Pitt thought that Lord Wellesley 'had acted most imprudently and illegally and that he could not be suffered to remain in the government.'⁹¹

For the failure of the siege of Bharatpur Lake himself was responsible to a great extent. His greatest mistake was to undertake the strength of the Jats of Bharatpur. His judgment went astray as he was in a constant blaze of excitement. He made hurried and over-confident attempts with an insufficient battering train, and without regular approaches and proper appliances.⁹² As Mill observes, "Neither Lake's experience and education nor temperament qualified him for directing the operations of the siege."⁹³

87. Duff, Vol. II, p.296. According to Thorn, 3100 men were killed on the British side (Memoir of the War in India, p.458.)

88. Fraser, Military Memoir of Skinner, Vol. II, pp.28-29.

89. Gleig, Life of Munro, Vol. I, pp.408-409.

90. Fraser, Military Memoir of Skinner, Vol. II, p.29.

91. Ross, Cornwallis' Correspondence, Vol. III, p.522.

92. Owen, A Selection of Wellesley's Despatches, p. XXVI.

93. Mill, Vol. VI, p.425.

During the siege of Bharatpur Jaswant Rao Holkar acted as if the survival of the fort was not his concern. Mohan Singh writes, "Holkar's men were seen to have no heart in their work."⁹⁴ Being constantly pressed by Jaswant Rao Holkar for money, Ranjit Singh was constrained to reply, "I have spent nearly one krora of rupees in the war and trouble which are due to my friendliness to you. It is unthinkable to supply money to you now."⁹⁵ Ranjit Singh was right. Jaswant Rao never proved himself to be an inspired leader of men throughout the siege. On the 14th March, when fighting was going on, he enjoyed "the Holi festival, the dancing of handsome girls and the singing of charming musicians."⁹⁶ Holkar's men were beaten practically on every front and his officers like Ganpat Rao, Kushaba Bakhshi and Jamdev Bhand disgraced themselves in action.⁹⁷ On the other hand Ranjit Singh exhibited great determination and dogged tenacity and definitely outshone Holkar during the siege. He never lost the support and devotion of his officers and soldiers such as Akhi Singh Purohit, Baldeo Singh, Dula Ram Thakur, Balha Faujdar, Nur Muhammad and Shyam Lal Katthu.⁹⁸ The Jats of Bharatpur put up a long and brave defence that has earned for them an imperishable epic fame in the annals of India.⁹⁹ The hour of his country's greatest peril revealed that Ranjit Singh, the Raja of Bharatpur, concealed in himself the ancient granite of his warrior race.

94. Waqai-Holkar, f. 165b.

95. Ibid., f. 192a.

96. Ibid., f. 169a.

97. Ibid., ff. 170a-171b.

98. Narrative of Kuen ff. 37b-38a.

99. Sardesai, New History of the Marathas, Vol. III, p.428.

Appendix D.

Thorn¹ gives the names of the important officers of Lake who were either killed or wounded in action on the 20th February, 1805, during the siege of Bharatpur.

Killed

Bengal Division - Lt. Steward, H.M. the 75th Regiment.

Wounded

1. Artillery Captain Nelly; Lt. Swimney, Lt. W. Hale.
2. H.M. the 65th Regiment - Captain Bates, Lt. Hutchins.
3. H.M. the 76th Regiment - Captain Hamilton and Lt. Moore.
4. H.M. the 8th Regiment - Lt. Kerr.
5. First Battalion, 12th Regiment - Major Radcliffe, Lts. Ryne and Taylor.
6. Second Battalion, 12th Regiment - Captain Fletcher, Lts. Barker, Drysdale and Aylmer.
7. First Battalion, 15th Regiment - Lts. Sibley and Turner.
8. Second Battalion, 22nd Regiment - Captain Griffiths and Lt. Blackeney.
9. Pioneer Corps - Lt. A. Lacket.
10. Bombay Division, First Grenadier Battalion - Captain Steele.
11. Bombay Division, First Battalion, Third Regiment - Captain Kemp.
12. Bombay Division, ^{First Battalion,} Ninth Regiment - Captain Haddington and Lt. Morrison.

1. Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, p.453.

Appendix E.

Following is the list of casualties¹ in the army of Lake in the storming of Bharatpur on the 21st February, 1805.

Killed

1. Major Menzies, Aid-de-Camp to Commander-in-Chief.
2. Artillery, Lt. George Gowing.
3. H.M. the 76th Regiment - Captain Corfield and Lt. Templeton.
4. Second Battalion, 15th Regiment - Lt. Hartley.
5. First Grenadier Battalion of the Bombay Division - Ensign J. Lang.

Wounded

1. Lt. Durant.
2. Artillery - Captain Pennington.
3. H.M. the 22nd Regiment - Lt. Wilson.
4. H.M. the 65th Regiment - Captains Symes, Warren and Watkins and Lts. Hutchings, O'Brien, Hinde, Chutterbuck and Harvey.
5. H.M. the 75th Regiment - Captain E. Engel and Lt. Mathewson.
6. H.M. the 76th Dragoons - Captain Manton, Lt. Sinclair and Quarter Master Hopkins.
7. H.M. the 8th Regiment - Captain Morton and Lt. Baird.
8. East India Company's European Regiment - Captain Ramsay, Lt. Hamilton, Ensign Chance.
9. First Battalion Second Regiment - Lt. Col. Hammond, Major Hawkes and Lt. Arbunthnot.
10. Bombay Division:- (a) Second Battalion Second Regiment - Lt. Thomas.
 (b) First Battalion Third Regiment - Lt. Toy.
 (c) First Battalion Ninth Regiment - Lt. Col. Taylor and Lt. Garraway.

1. Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, p.457.

CHAPTER XIV

The Last Phase of Jaswant Rao's Career

1. Assemblage at Sabalgarh.

With the end of the siege of Bharatpur in the summer of 1805, begins the last phase of the 'short and fitful'¹ career of Jaswant Rao Holkar. Like Prometheus enchained Jaswant figures in the last and most tragic chapter of his life. Major General Sir Thomas Munro, in one of his letters, thus expressed his opinion about Jaswant Rao Holkar: "I see nothing to be apprehended from such an enemy."² It is true that Holkar had not distinguished himself in the siege of Bharatpur, but he was still capable of creating great mischief.³ Peace was of so much importance to British India⁴ that Cornwallis declared it to be his intention to restore Jaswant Rao Holkar (that) territories and possessions which had been conquered from him by the British.⁵ One reason why Cornwallis was disposed to adopt this course was that it was reliably⁶ understood that Jaswant Rao was busy forming a daring project for leading a coalition against the British⁷ and Sindhia appeared to be fully bent on joining him.⁸

During the siege of Bharatpur Daulat Rao Sindhia had marched from Burhanpur towards Malwa. There was a strong rumour that he might attack the Company's provinces which lay completely exposed from Kalpi to Calcutta. Sindhia's hostile attitude was obvious from the

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1. Sarkar, Fall of the Mughal Empire, Vol. IV, p.344.
 2. Gleig: The Life of Major General Sir Thomas Munro, Vol. I, p.408.
 3. Wilson, History of British India, Book I, p.49.
 4. Duff, Vol. II, p.303.
 5. Mill, History of British India, Vol. VI, p.456.
 6. Ibid., p.449.
 7. Holkarshahichya Itihasanchi Sadhaner, Vol. III, No.72.
 8. Duff, Vol. II, p.300.

fact that he had already attacked, plundered and detained Mr. Jenkins, the acting British Resident in his camp. It was for this reason that a division of the British army in Bundelkhand commanded by Colonel Martindell, after advancing as far as Gwalior to reinforce the army at Bharatpur, fell back on Jhansi. While approaching the Chambal, Sindhia declared that he was marching towards Bharatpur to mediate peace between the contending parties. Sindhia was prepared to return to the South and act according to the wishes of the Company provided the Company did something to remove his financial distress. Daulat Rao also promised to make reparation for the outrage done to Mr. Jenkins. Apprehending a Sindhia-Holkar alliance, Lord Wellesley accepted this offer on the condition that Sindhia should return to Malwa and take possession of Holkar's unoccupied districts. Daulat Rao, pretending acceptance, retreated eight miles towards Sabalgad⁹ and posing as a mediator sent Sharza Rao Ghatge with a part of his cavalry and all the Pindaris towards Bharatpur. Sharza Rao was the man who had been urging Sindhia for a union with Holkar.¹⁰ According to Sir J.N. Sarkar, the change of Sindhia's attitude towards Holkar was based on the realisation that "he and his advisers could never shake off the fear that the expanding British Empire would soon reduce all the Indian States to vassalage."¹¹

Sharza Rao met Jaswant Rao Holkar at Weir.¹² Holkar had suffered heavy losses at Bharatpur. When he had entered 'Hindustan' (North India), his army consisted of 92 thousand men of whom sixtysix thousand were cavalry, seven thousand artillery, nineteen thousand infantry and one hundred and ninety pieces of ordnance. When Jaswant Rao left Bharatpur, his army was diminished to thirtyfive thousand horse, seven

9. Duff, Vol. II, pp.300-301.

10. Ibid., p.300.

11. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. XIV p. V.

12. Waqai-Holkar, f.173b.

thousand infantry and thirtyfive guns.¹³ Marching from Weir and accompanied by Sharza Rao, Jaswant reached Hindaun. From here he sent letters summoning all his captains to his side. Jamdeo Bhand recalled the battalions under Bhawani Shankar, Harnath Singh and Najib Khan, who had been sent from Bharatpur with four guns to the district of Dholpur-Bari, suffered a crushing defeat against Pohlman's battalion on the 7th April, gave up their guns and joined Jaswant Rao Holkar's camp at Hindaun.¹⁴ It was at this time that Bhawani Shankar and Murtaza Khan left Holkar's side and joined Lord Lake. Jaswant Rao's ears had been poisoned by the enemies of Bhawani Shankar and the former sent letters to Krishnaji Mahadik and other officers to arrest Bhawani Shankar immediately on his arrival at his camp. A friend of Bhawani Shankar informed him of Jaswant's plan. Bhawani Shankar in perplexity wrote to Lord Lake seeking shelter. Lake sent a kind reply asking him to come soon. Bhawani Shankar and Murtaza Khan received a hearty welcome from Lake who presented to each of them splendid khilats of five pieces, a sarpech, a pearl necklace, an elephant and two horses.¹⁵ It may be recalled that Bhawani Shankar had been the friend, philosopher and guide of Jaswant Rao Holkar in times of extreme distress. Jaswant Rao Holkar later repented much for having listened to 'worthless calumniations' of Harnath Dada against Bhawani Shankar.¹⁶

From Hindaun Jaswant Rao Holkar and Sharza Rao marched to Sabalgad. Of the 'unholy' alliance of the two chiefs, Lord Lake wrote to the Governor General on April 25, 1805, "There is no vile act these people are not equal to, that inhuman monster Holkar's chief delight is

13. Malcolm, Memoir of Central India, Vol. I, p.238.

14. Waqai-Holkar, ff. 174a-174b.

15. Ibid., ff. 175a-177a.

16. Ibid., f.178a.

butchering all Europeans and by all accounts Serjie Rao Ghatkia's disposition towards us is precisely the same."¹⁷ Jaswant Rao Holkar received a cordial reception in Sindhia's camp at Sabalgad.¹⁸ Here Holkar and Sindhia 'increased their friendship, exchanged courtesies and gifts and confirmed their alliance'.¹⁹ Daulat Rao Sindhia's explanation to the English with regard to his improved relation with Jaswant Rao was that the latter had the intention to plunder British territories, but had given up that design on Sindhia's request and was even prepared to make peace with the English.²⁰ Lord Wellesley was aware of the fact that Bapuji Sindhia and Sadashiv Bhau had joined Jaswant Rao with the consent of Sindhia. Daulat Rao, however, sent a lengthy apology to Lake saying that Bapuji Sindhia and Sadashiv 'had only feigned to join the enemy for the purpose of obtaining the subsistence for their troops.'²¹

Lord Lake, hearing the assemblage of Sindhia and Holkar at Sabalgad, left the vicinity of Bharatpur with the whole of his army. But the two chiefs, obviously wanting to avoid an engagement, retreated in a south-westerly direction towards Kota.²² According to Duff, their combined army consisted of 5,000 infantry with 140 guns, 12,000 silahdar horse and 12,000 Pindaris.²³ As the rains set in, Lake did not think it proper to take the offensive. He ordered the Bombay troops

17. Martin, Wellesley's Despatches, Vol. IV, p.531.

18. Duff, Vol. II, p.301.

19. Waghai-Holkar, f.174b. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. VII, p.268 - Translation of papers communicated to Captain Thomas Sydnham at a conference on the 11th June, 1805.

20. Duff, Vol. II, p.302.

21. Ibid., p.299.

22. Ibid., p.302.

23. Duff, Vol. II, p.302.

under General Jones to occupy a central position at Tonk Rampura. The main body of the Bengal army was stationed at Agra and Mathura and a detachment was placed at Gohad. Colonel Martindell's division returned to Bundelkhand.²⁴ Sindhia and Holkar moved from Kota towards Ajmer where in vain they solicited the Raja of Jodhpur to join them.²⁵ Jaswant Rao Holkar and Sharza Rao Ghatge strongly advocated continuing the war against the English. Sindhia was only half-willing to do so. Ambaji Inglia, the chief adviser of Sindhia, was of the opinion that the two chiefs should divide the kingdom of Mewar among themselves instead of fighting against the English. The prospect of ready money appealed to both the chiefs and they came to Badnor.²⁶ Rawat Sangram Singh Sakhawat and Krishna Pancholi, the two envoys of Maharana Bhim Singh of Mewar, made a piteous appeal to Jaswant Rao Holkar saying, "Do you want to sell Mewar to Ambaji Inglia?" Jaswant Rao was moved and he assured the envoys that he would persuade Daulat Rao to give up the design. He even returned the district of Nimbahere to the Maharana. After sometimes Jaswant felt disappointed and became furious when he learnt that Bhairav Baksh, an envoy of Bhim Singh, had gone to Lake's camp and sought the help of the British general for driving out the Marathas from Mewar. Alikar Tantia, a minister of Jaswant Rao, proposed that Ambaji Inglia should be appointed as the 'Subahdar' of Mewar. Everyone supported him with the exception of Bhaskar Bhau.²⁷ The position of Ambaji Inglia was far from happy. Jaswant Rao Holkar with the connivance of Sindhia²⁸ placed Ambaji under surveillance and demanded 65 lakhs of rupees

24. Duff, Vol. II, p.302

25. Ibid. Sardesai writes that Holkar left Sindhia's camp at Sabalgad and moved towards Ajmer. (New History of the Marathas, Vol. III, p.435).

26. Ojha, Rajputane ka Itihasa, Vol. II, p.1004.

27. Tod, Vol. I, pp. 532-535.

28. Duff, Vol. II, p.303.

from him.²⁹ Ingolia said that if he was allowed to go to Kota, he would find out the means to raise money. Jaswant agreed and sent Mir Khan and Bapuji Sindhia with Ambaji Ingolia. Having arrived at Kota, Ambaji succeeded in paying nearly half of the demand made upon him.³⁰

With the end of the rainy season, Jaswant Rao became restless and worried because he knew that Lake would resume his campaign in pursuit of him. He did not find Sindhia a willing coadjutor and the two were bound to separate soon. Jaswant had nothing to hope from Sindhia because of the temporising policy of Ambaji, the rekindling of old rivalry and Sindhia's conviction that it was useless to fight against the English.³¹ In view of these considerations, Jaswant Rao decided to leave Mewar, came to Ajmer to punish Jamdev Bhand for his exactions in that place and left the place early in September for Narnaul.³² His purpose was to take the road to Punjab and to get help from Ranjit Singh³³ and the Shah of Afghanistan.³⁴ It should not be forgotten that as early as 1800 Jaswant Rao addressed an arzee to Zaman Shah offering respect and submission to that monarch.³⁵

2. Jaswant Rao in Punjab.

The character of Daulat Rao Sindhia unfitted him for any heroic role, least for standing boldly against the British power.³⁶ After

29. Waqai-Holkar, f.177b.

30. Basawan Lal, Tr., p.271; Waqai-Holkar, f.177b. According to Tod, 55 lakhs were extorted from Ambaji (Vol. I, p.535.) Malcolm writes that Ambaji paid 56 lakhs. (Memoirs of Central India, Vol.I, p.239)

31. Duff, Vol. II, p.303.

32. Waqai-Holkar, f.178b.

33. Sardesai, New History of the Marathas, Vol. III, p.434.

34. Holkarshahichya Itihasanchi Sadhanen, Vol. II, 72.

35. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. IX, p.407.

36. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. XIV, p. V.

Holkar had departed from Mewar, Sindhia exacted Rs. 1,60,000 from the Maharana's territories with the help of Sadashiv Rao.³⁷ It was known to all that Sindhia and Holkar had separated. Malcolm wrote in Lake's name a strong letter to Daulat Rao Sindhia demanding the immediate release of Mr. Jenkins. Daulat Rao not only released Jenkins, but concluded a fresh treaty with the British on the 21st November, 1805, known as the Treaty of Mustafapur. Sharza Rao was dismissed and Munshi Kamal Narayan became the means of communication between the British and Sindhia.³⁸ It appears from the letter of R. Close, Resident with Sindhia, to J. Adams, the Secretary to Government, dated the 26th May, 1816, that Daulat Rao Sindhia never cherished any real anti-British *feeling*.³⁹ It is true that he corresponded with Ranjit Singh of Lahore⁴⁰ and he also subsequently wrote to Jaswant Rao Holkar in Punjab expressing satisfaction at the latter's meeting with Ranjit Singh. He wrote, "Please try to bring him (Ranjit Singh) over to our side. I am in all matters with you."⁴¹ As a matter of fact this was nothing but 'Daulat Rao Sindhia's vanity to pose as the greatest native power in Hindustan.'⁴² There was chronic mutiny among his troops on account of arrears of pay. Was it possible for him to break his relations with such a good pay-master as the Company?⁴³ Prinsep rightly remarks, "The disposition of the prince towards the British Government must on the whole be considered to have been rather favourable than otherwise."⁴⁴

37. Tod, Vol. I, p.535.

38. Sardesai, New History of the Marathas, Vol. III, pp.434-435.

39. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. XIV, p.333.

40. Ibid.

41. Holkarshahichya Itihasanchi Sadhane, Vol. II, p.50.

42. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. XIV, p. V.

43. Ibid.

44. Prinsep, Political and Military Transactions, Vol. I, p.23.

Jaswant Rao Holkar had left for Punjab with about 12,000 horse, 2000 or 3000 infantry and 30 guns.⁴⁵ Metcalfe and Malcolm, who were diplomats of the Wellesley school, heartily encouraged Lake to give him a hot pursuit.⁴⁶ Two divisions of the British army - one under General Jones from Rampura, and the other under Colonel Bell in the Rewari hills made ineffectual attempts to intercept Jaswant Rao Holkar.⁴⁷ With Colonel Bell Lake had sent Najabat Ali Khan, Ahmad Bangash Khan and Samand Khan and all Hindustani risaldars.⁴⁸ Lake himself arrived at Delhi on the 25th October, 1805⁴⁹ and set out in pursuit of Jaswant Rao with five regiments of cavalry and four battalions of infantry.⁵⁰

Jaswant Rao and Mir Khan were sanguine about getting the support of the Sikhs when they crossed the Satlaj on the 13th November, 1805.⁵¹ Ranjit Singh hurried from Lahore to Amritsar to attend a meeting of the 'Sarbat Khalsa' or an assembly of the Sikhs. It was unanimously agreed to withhold all aid from Holkar.⁵² So when Jaswant Rao requested Ranjit Singh for help, the Sukerchakia chief politely asked him for help against his own enemies in the Punjab. Lake demanded the active support of Ranjit Singh. The latter's reply was a non-committal one. Ranjit Singh, however, agreed 'to cause Jaswant Rao Holkar to remove with his army to the distance of thirty kos from Amritsar.'⁵³ According to Sardesai, Ranjit Singh also visited the British camp in disguise and concluded an agreement with

45. Duff, Vol. II, p.306.

46. Pearse, p.406.

47. Duff, Vol. II, p.306; Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, p.478.

48. Waqai-Holkar, f. 178b.

49. Ibid., f. 179a.

50. Duff, Vol. II, p.306.

51. Holkarshahichya Itihasanchi Sadhanen, Vol. II, 72.

52. Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, p.491.

53. Aitchison, Vol. VIII.

Lake and Malcolm in which he promised not to support Holkar.⁵⁴ Ranjit Singh at the same time did not want to provoke a troublesome visitor like Jaswant Rao Holkar who might let loose his troops upon his kingdom. His ideas about Holkar could be correctly read in the name by which the later called him, 'determined rascal' (Pakka haramzada).⁵⁵

Baffled in his hopes, Jaswant Rao wrote in a despondent tone to Bharmal Holkar, "Everyone is trying to save his own skin."⁵⁶ Mir Khan alone encouraged him saying, "At all events we have no immediate cause for alarm even if Ranjit Singh throws us off, we can retire upon Kabul, where I will engage to win over Shah Shuja to our interest."⁵⁷ Jaswant sent Vakils with presents to Shah Shuja, the kind of Kabul, who was then at Shikarpur.⁵⁸ But no assurance of help came from that side. Once Jaswant thought of interfering in the quarrel between Raja Sahib Singh of Patiala and his Rani. He is said to have remarked to Mir Khan, "God has assuredly sent us these two pigeons to pluck; do you take up the cause of one while I take up with the other."⁵⁹ But the interest of his followers was flagging. They wanted their master to give up the contest and accept the British overtures for peace. Ranjit Singh tried to effect a peace between the two parties and sent his envoy Fateh Singh to the British camp on the 19th December, 1805. Fateh Singh was received with great respect. Next day, Balram Seth, the vakil of Holkar,

54. Sardesai, New History of the Marathas, Vol. III, p.436.

55. Kaye, Selections from the Papers of Lord Metcalfe, Vol. I, p.267.

56. Holkarshahichya Itihasanchi Sadhane, Vol. II, p.49.

57. Basawan Lal, Tr., p.280.

58. Tarikh-i-Shah Shuja, f. 26.

59. Basawan Lal, Tr., p.276.

was introduced in Lake's camp. The discussions began and ended on the 24th December with the Treaty of Rajghat.⁶⁰ There were objections, evasions and delay from the side of Holkar. Lake threatened to attack and marched down the left bank of the Beas to Gogorwal Ghat on the 5th January.⁶¹ The firmness of Lake brought Holkar to his knees.⁶² In the afternoon of the 7th January, 1806, the treaty was presented to Lake with great ceremony. Thorn's description of the ceremony is worth quoting: "On the right of His Lordship was seated several of the Sikh Chiefs, whose joy at the event was visibly marked in their countenances and on his left were Col. Malcolm and the yakils of Holkar. A silk bag was first presented, containing a letter from Holkar, expressive of his pacific disposition, the sincerity of his professions, and his desire to live in amity with the English Government. After the reading of this, the treaty itself, signed and sealed by Holkar, was delivered to the General, at which instant a royal salute was fired, and Lake declared that as the British Government never violated any of its engagements the continuance of peace would depend upon themselves."⁶³

According to Basawan Lal, Jaswant Rao welcomed the Treaty of Rajghat as something God-sent.⁶⁴ His soldiers were so happy at the restoration of peace that they celebrated it with rejoicings for several days.⁶⁵ Mir Khan, however, maintained a sullen reserve.⁶⁶

60. Thorn, *Memoir of the War in India*, p.491; Duff, Vol. II, p.308. According to Malcolm, Balram Seth with an inferior agent called Shaikh Habibullah negotiated on behalf of Holkar the Treaty of Rajghat (*Memoirs of Central India*, Vol. I, p.249.)

61. Thorn, *Memoir of the War in India*, p.494.

62. Pearse, *Memoir of the Life and Services of Lake*, p.408.

63. Thorn, *Memoir of the War in India*, p.494.

64. Basawan Lal, *Tr.*, p.286.

65. Thorn, *Memoir of the War in India*, p.496.

66. *Ibid.*, p.499.

According to the Treaty of Rajghat it was decided that Jaswant Rao Holkar should renounce his rights to every place on the north of the Chambal and all claims on Poona and Bundelkhand. He agreed not to employ any European in his service without the consent of the Company's Government and never to admit Sharza Rao Ghatge into his councils or employment. Jaswant Rao Holkar was allowed to return to his own dominion by a route prescribed without injuring the territories of the British or their allies. The Company's Government engaged to keep their hands off from the possessions of Holkar south of the Chambal and to restore the forts and districts of the Holkar family in the Deccan excepting Chandore, its dependencies and the districts of Amber and Sheogaon. This was, however, a conditional measure, adopted as a security for Jaswant Rao's good behaviour during the period of 18 months.⁶⁷ Sir George Barlow, 'The silk-mercing knight of the Bath'⁶⁸ made an alteration in the treaty. He was of opinion that the reasons adduced by Lake for continuing the connections with the petty states north of the Chambal were outweighed by the political advantages of their dissolution.⁶⁹ Barlow restored to Jaswant Tonk Rampura and all the territory north of the Bundi hills, thus abandoning to his fate the Raja of Bundi who had rendered the British valuable help during the retreat of Monson.⁷⁰ This declaratory article to the Treaty of Rajghat came as a surprise to the Holkar himself and it was ascribed to the dread of the military talents of Jaswant Rao.⁷¹ The Treaty of Rajghat rang down the curtain on the Anglo-Holkar conflict.

67. Mill, History of British India, Vol. VI, pp.466-467; Duff, Vol.II, pp.309-310; Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, p.495; Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. V, p.182.

68. Hickey, Memoirs, Vol IV, p.344.

69. Duff, Vol. II, p.309.

70. Thorn, Memoir of the War in India, p.496; Duff, Vol. II, p.311.

71. Wilson, History of British India, Book I, p.50.

3. Jaswant Rao's activities after return from the Punjab upto 1808.

Jaswant Rao Holkar returned from the Punjab with the satisfaction that he had been able to save his ancestral state of Indore. But at heart he knew that all was lost. This is discernable in what he wrote to Vyankoji Bhosle of Nagpur, "The Maratha State had been grasped by the foreigners. To resist their aggression, God knows, how during the last two and a half years I sacrificed everything, fighting night and day without a moment's rest now we have all become self-seekers."⁷²

The uncalled for generosity of Barlow rekindled the ambition of Jaswant to reunite the members of the Maratha confederacy. While returning from the Punjab he levied contributions from Hariana which had been given to Abdul Samad Khan by the Company's Government as a reward for his services in the Anglo-Maratha War.⁷³ He also exacted 18 lakhs from the Raja of Jaipur besides similar exactions from other places.⁷⁴ Jaswant Rao began to make new and unreasonable claims on the British Government demanding the cession of additional lands in the Deccan, 18 districts in North India and the grant of jagirs for his family and adherents.⁷⁵ Sir George Barlow was determined to take no offence. He ascribed the 'insulting language of Holkar' to the unbridled violence of his temper. Lake warned Holkar that its repetition might lead to a renewal of hostilities.⁷⁶

In his heart Jaswant Rao Holkar nursed a sleepless desire to force another collision with the British power. In 1806 he commenced a complete reformation of his army by discharging most of his

72. Aitihāsik Patrvyabāhar, 394.

73. Wilson, History of British India, Book I, p.50.

74. Waqai-Holkar, f. 180b.

75. Wilson, History of British India, Book I, p.50.

76. Ibid.

irregular troops and introduced subordination and discipline ⁷⁷ in the rest. After returning to Bhampura, he formed his cavalry force of ten thousand into regiments and ordered new horses to be purchased to double their number. Better kind of discipline was enforced among his ten thousand 'silahdars'. Jaswant Rao disbanded his old infantry and formed twelve new battalions - the large (uttam), the middle (madhyam) and the small (kanishtha). Every recruit was measured and sent to the corps for which his stature fitted him. He was out early in the morning drilling the troops, making them accustomed to the hottest fire and directing the sham fights.⁷⁸ He was impatient of the least opposition. Having seen what British artillery was, Jaswant opened a gun-factory at Bhampura. He was successful in casting about two hundred pieces of brass ordnance many of which were mounted as gallopers. Sobharam was the Chief Director of this factory. Jaswant himself poured molten iron into the mould of his new cannon.⁷⁹ The least delay in the supply of metal would make him furious.⁸⁰ These feverish activities were the forerunners of his subsequent insanity.

Along with the reorganisation of the army, Jaswant Rao Holkar appears to have resumed his activities for the formation of another confederacy after returning from the Punjab.⁸¹ As Mr. R. Jenkins, the Resident at Nagpur, wrote to Lord Minto on the 28th November, 1807 - "It is indeed so obviously the character of Holkar to wish to appear the promoter of plans, although merely nominal, for confederacies and enterprises and probably so much his interest to appear so to his troops, that it is not unlikely such stipulation

77. Malcolm, *Memoirs of Central India*, Vol. I, p.241.

78. *Ibid.*, p.248.

79. *Ibid.*, p.247.

80. *Sindheshahichya Itihasanchi Sadhane*, Vol. II, p.133.

81. *Poona Residency Correspondence*, Vol. V, p.129; *Holkarshahichya Itihasanchi Sadhane*, Vol. II, p.70.

may have been proposed also to the Rajah."⁸² Jaswant Rao appointed Shamrao Vitthal as his envoy at the Baroda Court to resume the old friendly relations.⁸³ Mir Khan held several meetings with Daulat Rao Sindhia.⁸⁴ Mountstuart Elphinstone wrote to the Governor General on the 10th September, 1806 "Sindhia had in connecting himself with Holkar irreperably injured his reputation for good faith; he exchanged the friendship of the British for a hollow alliance with a Power that would one day swallow him up."⁸⁵ In November, 1807, the yakils of Jaswant Rao related to Raghuji Bhosle the services which their master had rendered to the Maratha cause and the efforts which he had made to raise high the Mahratta name. Their demands were that Bhosle should unite with Holkar in a common cause, furnish him with funds to enable him to increase his forces in order to prosecute his plans 'for the common good' and also send some chief of reputation to act in conjunction with Holkar.⁸⁶ Jaswant Rao, who was in financial distress, requested Bhosle to return the jewels and property which the latter had confiscated during the former's confinement at Nagpur. Bhosle showed no sign of complying with the request of Jaswant. He wanted the friendship between the two families to remain on its present footing, and nothing more.⁸⁷ Jaswant sent another yakil named Raj Muhammad to Nagpur.⁸⁸ He was told that Bhosle had neither money nor troops to spare.

Thus, once again the attempt for forming a Maratha confederacy against the British failed. Daulat Rao Sindhia could do nothing except holding whispered conferences. The Bhosle of Nagpur was even

82. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. V, p.137.

83. Selections from Baroda State Records, Vol. IV, p.555.

84. Holkarshahichya Itihasanchi Sadhane, Vol. II, p.70.

85. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. V, p.129.

86. Ibid., pp. 135-136.

87. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. V, p.135.

88. Ibid., p.136.

weaker than Daulat Rao.⁸⁹ He did nothing more than advise Jaswant Rao Holkar to act with caution and circumspection.⁹⁰ Though the possibility of a Maratha coalition never left Jaswant Rao, he was always very anxious to avoid a collision with the English unless Sindhia and Bhosle joined him. He forbade his captains from crossing the Tapti and entering into the British protected territory and did not allow Mir Khan to molest the Peshwa's jagirdars.⁹¹ Jaswant Rao wrote to Colonel Close, the Resident at Poona, "By the blessings of God, no circumstances have hitherto occurred, which was not compatible with our reciprocal satisfaction."⁹²

4. Jaswant Rao's insanity and death.

During his stormy career Jaswant Rao Holkar had known no rest barring the occasional outbursts of wild orgies. The strenuous and busy life, the ceaseless campaigns, the dissipated habits, the excessive use of liquor, the hard labour at the factory at Bhampura and above all the frustration of his plans and efforts affected his mind.

Since his return from the Punjab he was constantly worried about money. In 1805 a serious rebellion broke out in his army when he declared his intention of disbanding the Deccan cavalry. Ganpat Rao, the Diwan of Jaswant Rao, had misappropriated the pay of soldiers.⁹³ At his instigation the soldiers declared that Jaswant Rao Holkar was an usurper, being the son of a concubine and Khande Rao alone was the legitimate representative of the House of Holkar. At last it was decided that Ganpat Rao and Khande Rao should be delivered to them

89. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. XIV, p. V.

90. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. V, p. 136.

91. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. XIV, p. 13.

92. Ibid., p. 14.

93. Waqai-Holkar, f. 181a.

as hostages for the payment of their dues. It is said that Khande Rao though only ten years of age remonstrated against the proceedings of the soldiers: "You will receive your arrears and then abandon me to destruction." All that Jaswant Rao had received from Jaipur was given to the mutineers. Ganpat Rao fled away to Jaipur. According to Malcolm, Khande Rao was poisoned by Jaswant Rao on the advice of Chimna Bhau as the former might prove to be a source of further trouble.⁹⁴ Basawan Lal too asserts that Holkar poisoned Khande Rao.⁹⁵ But their statements are contradicted by Bhawani Shankar who had no reason to be sympathetic towards Jaswant Rao Holkar at that time. Mohan Singh writes: "At Shahpura his (Jaswant's) nephew died of cholera. Although Jaswant's heart was deeply afflicted with grief at this sudden calamity, he resigned himself to patience."⁹⁶ Malcolm holds that Jaswant Rao also brought about the death of his brother Kashi Rao in 1808. Kashi Rao and his wife Anandi Bai were under the charge of Chimna Bhau. A party of Bangash Pathans under Dadan Khan made an attempt to release them. Malcolm, on the evidence of a sepoy in the service of Chimna Bhau, writes: "Cashee Row and his wife had been removed to Beejagurh, and were prisoners in a house near the lower part of that place, when its being surrounded by Bangash Khan's Patans, led to an order for their immediate execution."⁹⁷ According to Sardesai, the charge against Jaswant Rao Holkar that he brought about the death of Khande Rao and Kashi Rao are not borne out by evidence.⁹⁸

Jaswant Rao Holkar had the first fit of insanity on the 20th October, 1807, when he began to utter inarticulate mutterings while

94. Malcolm, *Memoirs of Central India*, Vol. I, pp.242-243.

95. Basawan Lal, *Tr.*, p.307.

96. *Wagai-Holkar*, f. 182a.

97. Malcolm, *Memoirs of Central India*, Vol. I, p.244.

98. Sardesai, *New History of the Marathas*, Vol. III, p.438.

performing 'Arati' before the deity.⁹⁹ He got a warning of what was to come. Jaswant gave an indication of his mental state to Balram Seth: "What I say one moment, I forget the next, give me physic." He became more and more violent as days passed. Sometimes twenty or thirty men were required to master him and bind him with ropes like a wild beast. Sometimes like a child he used to hide himself in a large bundle of loose clothes in his apartment. During violent fits of madness he used to give innumerable orders for putting different persons to death. None could approach him except Balram Seth. Balram would sit trembling before Jaswant because of the constant fear of the latter's uncertain mood. Jaswant Rao used to say at times, "What is the matter with you, Balram?" 'A slight fever' was the reply.¹⁰⁰ Many had a superstitious belief that some evil spirit which haunted Jaswant's palace had bereft him of reason. Consequently, he was removed to Garāt, a town situated fifteen miles south-west from Bhampura. He was kept in a tent carefully attended by Lakshmi Bai, an elderly lady universally respected, and surrounded by guards. Lakshmi Bai gained such an extraordinary influence over Jaswant that he did like a child everything she wished. Mir Khan sent a muslim physician to treat him. Sindhia also sent one Khande Rao Joshi for the same purpose. Khande Rao was made the object of many malicious and indecent jests by Jaswant Rao. Once Jaswant Rao gave a severe beating to his 'Guru' Chimna Bhau. Sometimes when he would regain normal state, he used to say, "you acted right, I must have been very mad, but release me from cords; send for my brother

99. Holkaranchi Kaifyat, p.110 - "आरती करवां बैलैस प्रकृति बैलैस होऊन अनिर्वान्य शब्द वगैरे चेष्टा करस्यास प्रारंभ केला।"

100. Malcolm, Memoirs of Central India, Vol. I, pp.249-250.

Mir Khan and make me well."¹⁰¹ Gradually, all hopes of his recovery faded away.

During the period of Jaswant Rao Holkar's insanity, Tulsi Bai came into limelight as the Head of the Holkar State. Daughter of Ajiba, a priest of Man Bhao sect, she possessed sufficient learning, winning manners, beauty, talents and determination, but at the same time she was cruel and dissolute and 'had all the frailties and vices of her sex.'¹⁰² She had been brought from Mandu by Shyamrao Mahadik and put into the harem of Jaswant Rao Holkar. Her husband was at first thrown into prison but later on at Tulsi Bai's intercession sent to the south with a horse, a khilat, and a small sum of money.¹⁰³ As a favourite concubine of Jaswant Rao, Tulsi Bai in a short time had gained commanding influence over household and public affairs. After Jaswant Rao became insane, Tulsi Bai gave her confidence to Balram Seth who also had the support of Mir Khan.¹⁰⁴ Balram Seth had begun his career as the superintendent of weighing and supplying of grain for Jaswant's cattle. He had gained his master's confidence and had been employed as the negotiator of the Treaty of Rajghat. Malcolm writes, "There was a mixture of pliancy, of falsehood and of good ambition in this man's character.... he promised everything that was asked and seldom performed what he promised."¹⁰⁵

There was complete anarchy in the Holkar State during the period from 1808 to 1811. There was a mutiny of soldiers which was suppressed

101. Malcolm, Memoirs of Central India, Vol. I, pp. 250-252.

102. Ibid., pp. 278-279.

103. Ibid., pp. 260-261.

104. Holkarshahichya Itihasanchi Sadhane, Vol. II, p. 70.

105. Malcolm, Memoirs of Central India, Vol. I, pp. 281-282.

by Mir Khan. The Bhils, encouraged by the absence of regular government, began to plunder the open plains. Villages and towns were burnt and sacked. Several of the principal officers such as Ram Din, Jaggu Bapu, Roshan Beg, Bapu Vishnu were appointed Subehdars and sent away with their military detachments. They heavily bribed the favourite ministers of Tulsi Bai and in received the latitude to plunder.¹⁰⁶ They plundered and levied contributions from Holkar's territories, the districts of Sindhia, Pawar and other petty chiefs in Malwa.¹⁰⁷ The Pindaris of Holkar devastated the districts to the north of Ujjain.¹⁰⁸

In 1809, Dharma Kuwar, who had been a favourite servant of Jaswant Rao and was now a Colonel of Holkar's army, made a bold attempt to capture power. He put guards over the tent of Jaswant Rao and ordered that none was to see Jaswant Rao or Tulsi Bai without his permission. Dharma warned the ministers not to take any measure without consulting him.¹⁰⁹ Balram Seth, Ghaffur Khan and Raja Mahipat Ram began to plot against Dharma's power and life. Mahipat Ram was shot dead by a sepoy of Dharma and his head was cut off and thrown before Jaswant's tent. Dharma sent orders to Ghaffur Khan to leave the camp. Ghaffur Khan marched away to Jaora plundering all along his route. Dharma Kuwar made a pilgrimage with his army and the family of Jaswant Rao to the temple of Mahadeva near Udaipur, as some Brahmanas had predicted the recovery of his master if this was done. Balram Seth and Tulsi Bai made secret representations to Mir Khan to rescue them from Dharma Kuwar. Mir Khan, who had been operating near Nagpur, left the place with the advance of a British

106. Malcolm, *Memoirs of Central India*, Vol. I, pp.275-282; Holkar-shahichya Itihasanchi Sadhne, Vol. II, p.82.

107. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. XIV, p.29.

108. *Ibid.*, p.55.

109. Malcolm, *Memoirs of Central India*, Vol. I, pp.264-265.

army under Sir Barry Close, and surrounded the camp and the army of Dharma Kuwar near Bara Sadri in 1810. Mir Khan demanded the immediate surrender of Jaswant from Dharma Kuwar. As the latter refused, hostilities commenced and lasted for fifteen days. Mir Khan's cavalry could not make any impression on the infantry and artillery of Dharma. But Dharma was hardpressed as his supplies were cut off. Dharma then took Jaswant Rao, Tulsi Bai and the young prince Malhar III to a thick part of the jungle in order to put them to death. They were rescued in time by Rattoo Patil who was an officer in charge of Holkar's household troops. Dharma and his principal associate Sobharam were arrested and later put to death. It is said that they enjoyed drinks and dance even on the last night of their life.¹¹⁰ When the executioner made an ineffectual blow at the neck of Dharma, the latter said, "take both hands you rascal, after all, it is the head of Dharma that is to be cut off."¹¹¹

Mir Khan's arrival at Holkar's camp did not improve the situation. All along he had maintained amicable relations with Holkar's ministers, specially Balram Seth. But occasionally he pressed them hard for money.¹¹² Once he had even seized the treasury of Holkar which contained ten lakhs of rupees.¹¹³ Balram Seth had, thereupon, proposed to Anna Ramchandrar that an alliance be made with Sindhia for mutual defence against Mir Khan.¹¹⁴ After the death of Dharma Kuwar, Mir Khan remained about two months with the army of Jaswant Rao and then

110. Malcolm, *Memoirs of Central India*, Vol. I, pp. 266-271.

111. *Ibid.*, p.271.

112. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. XIV, p.381.

113. Malcolm, *Memoirs of Central India*, Vol. I, p.262.

114. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. XIV, p.29.

taking more than a crore and sixtyfour lakhs of rupees, marched away to Rajputana to collect the tributes due to the Holkar State by the Raja of Jaipur and other princes.¹¹⁵ On the way, he detached a force to attack Kumbhalner which originally belonged to the Maharana of Udaipur and for several years was in the possession of Sindhia.¹¹⁶ While in Rajputana he threatened to destroy the temple of Eklinga unless eleven lakhs of rupees were paid to him,¹¹⁷ and later was responsible for the tragedy of Krishna Kumari.¹¹⁸ It is to be noted that on an earlier occasion Jaswant had expressed his disapprobation of Mir Khan's conduct in the strongest terms.¹¹⁹

Jaswant Rao showed no signs of recovery though the treatment had lingered on for nearly three years. A year before his death, he expressed his wish to visit Jejuri for the cure of his insanity.¹²⁰ The Peshwa at first thought that it was merely a pretext. He objected to his visit on the ground that Holkar might intrigue with Appa Sahib or some other jagirdars and his Pindaris might injure the country through which they would pass. Elphinstone assured the Peshwa that Holkar was not in a state to do any harm and recommended that as a safeguard the number of Holkar's escort should be limited to five hundred.¹²¹ The Peshwa at last gave his permission.¹²²

115. Malcolm, Memoirs of Central India, Vol. I, pp.274-275.

116. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. XIV, p.56.

117. Ojha, Rajputane ka Itihasa, Vol. III, p.1009.

118. Ibid., pp.1005-1007; Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. XIV, pp.62-63.

119. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. XIV, p.50.

120. Ibid., p.51.

121. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. X, p.5.

122. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. XIV, p.80.

Jaswant Rao Holkar felt that his time had come. Tulsi Bai, who had no child, adopted Malhar Rao III, the only son Jaswant Rao had by Kesaria Bai.¹²³ Jaswant's wish was that the Peshwa should grant his son a robe of investiture (khilat). He made a request to Elphinstone to persuade the Peshwa to do this.¹²⁴ Elphinstone was sympathetic as it appeared to him a mere matter of ceremony with 'no effect on affairs of real life.'¹²⁵ Edmonstone was also of the opinion that the question of investiture was likely to cause no harm to the Peshwa and that its grant 'would be entirely compatible with the views and wishes of British Government.'¹²⁶

Death put an end to the sufferings of Jaswant Rao Holkar in the morning of the 11th of Kartik, Samvat 1868,¹²⁷ corresponding to the 27th October, A.D. 1811,¹²⁸ at Bhampura. He had not yet completed the 35th year of his life. The Peshwa, who had once called Holkar a monster, stopped his nahbat (band) for three days on hearing of Holkar's death. A small but elegant and solid mausoleum was erected by Malhar III over the ashes of his father.¹²⁹ Malcolm visited the mausoleum and found one of Jaswant Rao Holkar's favourite horses enjoying rest and good food near tomb of his master¹³⁰ - the last typical Maratha soldier to make a name in history.¹³¹

123. Malcolm, Memoirs of Central India, Vol. I, p.283.

124. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. XII, p.17.

125. Ibid., p.30.

126. Ibid., p.51.

127. Holkarshahichya Itihasanchi Sadhane, Vol. II, p.120; Holkaranchi Kaifyat, p.116.

128. Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. XIV, p.95. According to Malcolm (Vol. I, p.253) and Duff (Vol. II, p.230) Jaswant died on the 20th October, 1811.

129. Shindeshahichya Itihasanchi Sadhane, Vol. II, p.139.

130. Malcolm, Memoir of Central India, Vol. I, p.253.

131. Sardesai, New History of the Marathas, Vol. III, p.436.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

A mass of original matter is available for the history of Jaswant Rao Holkar. His arresting personality attracted notice and excited admiration and hatred amongst his contemporaries. It is not easy to sift through this imposing mass of evidence and bring out a work of compact integrity without bogging down in details. Not only the personality of Jaswant Rao Holkar was colourful and flamboyant, but his biography is a vehicle for the history of a period which had a decisive effect on the future development of our country. The Persian Sources, though invaluable for the study of Jaswant Rao's career, are preoccupied with wars, campaigns and conquests; it is only the Maratha Sources that provide the inner history of the man - his hopes, aspirations and fears. They are also important as objective data. The English sources, rich in letters, despatches and memoirs, enable one to gain an excellent understanding of Jaswant Rao's career and the times he lived in. The English sources are of great value, because these have come from pen of soldiers and diplomats, who were in intellectual calibre far superior to their Indian contemporaries. The English through their agents and spies were better informed of men and affairs in every Indian principality, than even the Marathas of the things under the shadow of their courts.

Original Sources - Persian.

1. Amirnamah by Basawan Lal. Translated by H.T. Prinsep in 1832. Basawan Lal, son of Tansukh Rai, belonged to a Kayasth-family of Bilgram in Oudh. He served Mir Khan for a long time as a Naib Munshi. Basawan Lal was encouraged by Muhammad Wazir Khan - son of Mir Khan - to record the adventures and exploits of his father. He was not

always an eye-witness of the events described in his work. As depicted in the Amirnamah, Mir Khan appears to be an image of perfection. Basawan Lal's estimate of his master's gifts is apparently an exaggerated one. He writes, "The junction of the Ameer was to Maharaj Holkar a source of great strength and satisfaction" (p.97); but unfortunately, Jaswant was not always kind, courteous and faithful to Mir Khan (p.123). Basawan Lal claims that Mir Khan censured Jaswant for his attack on the Widows of Mahadaji Sindhia (p.129), always advised Jaswant who was then rising in prominence (p.111), and consoled him after the defeat at the battle of Indore (pp.139-140). According to him, it was Mir Khan who advised Jaswant not to allow Close to leave Poona (p.176). Though he praises Jaswant's courage and skill as a soldier at the battle of Ujjain (p.138), against Sadashiv Bhaskar on the 5th October, 1802 (p.157), and at the battle of Hadapsar (p.166), he shows Mir Khan as superior to him in heroic exploits, practical ability and bold strategy. Basawan Lal's account of the battle of Dig (p.230), the death of Lucan (p.216), the distress of Lake in campaign against Holkar (p.225), is far from satisfactory. His dates are also to be verified. He wrongly states that Lake ordered Monson to follow up the war against Holkar (p.296). He writes that it was Mir Khan who advised Jaswant to get help from Shah Shuja and Ranjit Singh of Lahore (p.280). Basawan Lal asserts that Jaswant Rao poisoned his nephew Khande Rao II (p.307). He describes in sufficient details the Bundelkhand campaign and the Doab campaign (pp.250-264) of Mir Khan. Though Basawan Lal's Amirnamah presents the version of an apologist of Mir Khan and is laudatory in style, it yields valuable information for the present work. Considered as a whole, it is a work of uneven value.

2. Waqai-Holkar by Mohan Singh.

This Persian work has been miscalled by the Maratha writers as Bhawani Shankar's Diary. Bhawani Shankar could not hold a pen as the fingers of both his hands had been destroyed by a bayonet thrust in a fight with two battalions of Dudrenco in December, 1798 (f.66b). Waqai-Holkar is admittedly the composition of Mohan Singh in Persian from facts narrated by Bhawani Shankar. It has all the elements of a sober history and its author is much less metaphorically inclined than Basawan Lal without sacrificing the reader's interest. Since the facts were provided by Bhawani Shankar who was sometimes an eye-witness, it is eminently valuable for an understanding of Jaswant Rao's career. It is a matter of regret that Mohan Singh did not continue the history of Jaswant Rao after the 25th September, 1808. To him we owe a full account of Jaswant's early career based on intimate personal knowledge (f.6b-73b). He maintains the sequence of events precisely and supplies full information of various campaigns of Jaswant Rao Holkar. Though Bhawani Shankar was in sympathy with Jaswant Rao, he did not omit the unpleasant facts relating to him (f.102b; f.165b; f.175b). Surprisingly enough, he justifies the action of Jaswant against the widows of Mahadaji Sindhia on the ground that the latter planned to seduce his troops (f. 85b). Mohan Singh's account of Lucan's death is not clear (f. 134b); he also does not write anything about the action on the 11th July, 1804, when he describes the retreat of Monson (f. 135a - f. 140b). He writes that at Hadapsar, Jaswant received one sword cut, whereas actually he received three sword-cuts (f. 110a). It is from Waqai-Holkar that we know that Khande Rao I died of cholera (f. 182a). On the whole, this work must be regarded

as a primary source for the period it covers. Persian text has been translated by Sir Jadunath Sarkar, but has not been published.

3. Narrative of Kuen.

John Gottlieb Kuen, a German native of Poland migrated to India, wrote a valuable history of the Bharatpur Royal House coming down to the capture of the fort of Bharatpur by the English in 1826. This work, written in Persian prose, was presented to Captain Abraham Lockett. The only known manuscript of it is preserved in the British Museum. It has been translated in English by Sir Jadunath Sarkar in Bengal Past and Present Vol. LXXIV, part II (July-December). Kuen throws considerable light on the siege of Bharatpur (f.37a-f.38a). He writes that Lucan was killed by a shot (f.33b). Reference is made to Holkar's defeat at Farrukhabad (f.34b).

4. Tarikh-i-Shah Shuja.

From this autobiography of Shah Shuja, it is known that Jaswant Rao sent yakils to the King of Kabul, who was then at Shikarpur (f.26).

5. Calendar of Persian Correspondence.

Volume I and volume IV throw light on the activities of Malhar Rao Holkar and Tukoji Holkar. It is interesting to note that Malhar was bribed by Shuja-ud-daula to fight against the English (Vol. I, 2348, 2524), and that Tukoji advised Shah Alam to confer the office of 'Mir Bakhshi' upon Zabita Khan (Vol. IV, 122).

Original Sources - Marathi.

(6-15). Selections from the Peshwa Daftar edited by Rao Bahadur G. S.

Sardesai and published by the Bombay Government in 45 volumes. There is a wealth of information in the contemporary despatches,

news letters, private letters, sanads etc. contained in these volumes. The information about Jaswant Rao Holkar is meagre. In the present work the following volumes have been chiefly used:

Vol. II. Letters and Despatches relating to the Battle of Panipat, 1747-1761.

Vol. X. Early strife between Bajirao and the Nizam.

Vol. XIII. Bajirao's entry into Malwa and Bundelkhand.

Vol. XIV. Maratha conquests in the North.

Vol. XXII. The Bhonsles of Nagpur.

Vol. XXX. Miscellaneous papers of Shahu and his first two Peshwas.

Vol. XXXXI. The 1st days of the Maratha Raj (1779-1818)

Vol. XXXXII. Social life under the Peshwas (1727-1797)

Vol. XXXXIV. Some Historical Families.

Vol. XXXXV. Documents illustrating Maratha Administration.

There are papers which throw light on Malhar Rao Holkar's Amjhera campaign (XIII, 33), and campaigns against Muhammad Khan Bangash (X, 70), and Jai Singh and Khan-i-Dauran (XIV, 24, 26, 27, 57). It is from these selections that we get a clear idea of the Saranjam of 74 parganas granted to Malhar Rao (XIII, 54-56; XIV, 58). Of particular interest are the letter of Jaswant Rao Holkar to the Peshwa on Vithoji's execution (XXXI, 30) and the news-letters regarding the battle near Handia (XXXI, 31) and Jaswant's ravages in Khandesh (XXXI, 34). Letters Nos. 37 and 38 (Vol. XXXXI), which are supposed to give 'an account of the battle of Bharatpur between the English and Holkar' are misleading. A letter communicates the reverses which the British sustained at the hands of Holkar near Bharatpur and the consequent sensation produced in the Deccan!! most of the dates have been provisionally fixed and should be accepted with caution.

16. Marathanchi Itihasanche Sadhanen (Original Materials for the History of the Marathas) in 22 volumes published by V.K. Rajwade.

Rajwade, one of the founders of Bharat Itihas Samshodhak Mandal, published papers of a miscellaneous character with learned introductions. In the present work volume X has been used. It is concerned mostly with the events at Poona Durbar. It throws ample light on maladministration and lawlessness during the regime of Peshwa Baji Rao II (X, pp.339-340), and the execution of Vithoji Holkar (X, p.525). Rajwade emphasises the lack of scientific spirit as the main cause which disabled the Marathas from achieving success over the English. Sometimes his criticism is coloured by his own prejudices. He writes, "An Englishman is a born political animal possessing the glittering polish of a gentleman, but diabolic at heart."

17. Purandare Daftar in 3 volumes, edited by K.V. Purandare.

It is a collection of old papers relating to the Purandare family who were intimately connected with the family of the Peshwas since the days of Balaji Vishwanath. Volume II which covers the period from 1791 to 1803 is useful for our purpose. Jaswant's ^{Deccan} campaign has been well-described in this volume. Otherwise it does not furnish additional information regarding Jaswant Rao's career.

18. Phalke's Kota Papers in 2 volumes.

Volume II gives a few details of early years of Jaswant Rao Holkar (Vol. II, 128, 129, 138).

19. Dhar State Historical Records, Vol. III, pt. I, 1722-1807.

It implements our knowledge regarding Jaswant Rao's relations with Anand Rao Pawar.

20. Hingane Daftar in 2 volumes edited by G.H. Khare (1947).

It is a collection of old papers concerning the Hingane family which had never much sympathy for the Holkars. The papers show decadence of the Holkar family and maladministration in Holkar State (Vol. II, Letter No.93). The Hinganes once suggested the suppression of the entire state on account of the incompetency of its rulers.

21. Peshwanchi Bakhar, edited by Sohoni.

It contains incidental references about Jaswant Rao Holkar. A paper describes the execution of Vithoji Holkar (p.174).

22. Jivaji Ballal Yanchen Charitra, edited by Rajadhyaksha (1907).

It contains news-writers' reports which are contemporaneous. It gives a good account of the Widows' War and criticises Jaswant Rao for treacherously attacking the Widows (Letters No.299, 329).

- 23-27. Aitihasik Lekh Sangraha, edited by V.V. Khare and Y.V.Khare in 15 volumes upto 1810.

The members of the Patwardhan family occupied places of great importance in the Maratha State in the Peshwa period. Of this family 13 members had been killed and 16 wounded in various wars fought by the Marathas. Aitihasik Lekh Samgraha contains a large number of news-letters written by the Patwardhan chiefs to their master or their relatives. Sir Jadunath Sarkar observes that these letters 'form a priceless treasury of the raw materials of Maratha history.' (House of Shivaji, p.288).

Aitihasik Lekh Sangraha is a store-house of valuable historical details regarding Jaswant Rao Holkar. In the present work volumes IX, X, XIII, XIV, XV have been chiefly used. Volume IX furnishes for the present work valuable information on Sindhia's ascendancy at

Poona Durbar (3733, 5058), and Baji Rao II's character (4811, 3703 and 3704). Volume X throws light on the early life of Jaswant Rao Holkar (4079). Volume XIII gives detailed account of Jaswant in exile (6866), his relations with Anand Rao Pawar (6866), attack on the Widows (6862), Battle of Indore (6883, 6885), execution of Vithoji (6858), demands of Holkar from Sindhia (6930), Paraji's mission to Poona Durbar (7413) and Deccan campaign of Jaswant (6927, 7421). Volume XIV is useful for Jaswant's success at the battle of Hadapsar (6465), Peshwa's flight from Poona (6470), the Treaty of Bassein (7459-7471), Jaswant's ascendancy at Poona (6475, 6481, 6491) and the activities of Amrit Rao (6485, 6630, 6634, 7640).

28. Peshwaichi Akher.

It contains a few references ^{about} to Jaswant Rao Holkar. It furnishes sufficient information on the execution of Vithoji Holkar (p.101).

29. Selections from the Peshwa's Diaries.

The selections were prepared by Rao Bahadur Ganesh Chimnaji Vad from the original Marathi records and an English summary is ^{given} below each item. The selections published in 15 volumes, cover a period of over a hundred years (1708-1816). Volume V is useful for our purpose. It throws light on administrative affairs, political events and also social life during the regime of Baji Rao II.

30. Marathi Rumals I and II edited by Bhawe.

They do not contribute much new information on Jaswant Rao Holkar. There is an interesting paper on Bapu Gokhale's campaign (Rumal II, p.13).

31. Gulgule - Records of the Gulgule family of Maratha tribute-collectors stationed at Kota (now known as the Sardars of Sarola House).

Gulgule Daftar gives us a rare insight into the political and

economic conditions in the time of Jaswant Rao. The Gulgule letters mention some important facts about Lakhwa Dada's death (letter 22nd May, 1801), Battle of Indore (letter - 19th October, 1801), Jaswant's campaign in the south (letter - 25th June, 1802), devastations of Desh districts (letter - 21st July, 1802), the distress of Sindhia's soldiers after their defeat at Hadapsar (letter - 7th November, 1803). The Kota agent in Poona comments on Jaswant Rao's success at Hadapsar - "The deluge that has overwhelmed the Deccan still continues. God does not let us see how mankind is to survive." (Letter - 20th October, 1802).

32. Maheshwar Darbaranchin Batami-patren, edited by D.B. Parasnis in 2 volumes with supplementary volumes on Holkar Darbarantil Hinganyanchi Vakili (1911).

The correspondence brings out some phases of diplomatic relations among the Maratha chiefs, but this information is to be accepted with caution.

33. Aitihāsik Povade, edited by Kelkar.

It is useful for the activities of the Peshwa Baji Rao II, but does not provide sufficient information for the present work.

- 34-35. Historical papers of the Sindhias of Gwalior, published by the Satara Historical Research Society, 2 volumes (1934 and 1940).

They throw a flood of light on the genesis of Sindhia - Holkar rivalry, but they provide only a one-sided picture. Nevertheless, the historical importance of these papers cannot be denied.

36. Historical Selections from the Baroda State Records, Vol. IV (1799-1813).

It furnishes information on predatory activities of Jaswant Rao

Holkar in Khandesh (letter No.21) and in Dhar (34, 36). After returning from Punjab, Jaswant appointed Shyamrao Vitthal as his envoy to the Baroda Court (101).

37. Historical Papers relating to Mahadji Sindhia, edited by G. S. Sardesai.

It serves a most useful purpose in providing information on Ahalya Bai Holkar and Tukoji Holkar. A paper describes the injustice and oppression perpetrated over the people in Sindhia's territories (p.607). Another discloses the deep-rooted animosity between Mahadji Sindhia and Tukoji Holkar (p.846).

38. Selections from Chandrachuda Records obtained from Bharat Itihasa Sanshodhak Mandala, Poona published by the Records Department, Gwalior.

It is extremely valuable as a contemporary record of the different activities of Ahalya Bai Holkar. Some of the important papers show Ahalya Bai blaming Tukoji Holkar for ruining the state (p.9), congratulating Mahadji Sindhia for the Treaty of Salbai (p.57), and ordering Madhav Rao Gangadhar to make arrangements for ten thousand pilgrims coming from the south (p.49).

39. Holkar-Shahi Patra-vvababar by Bhagwat, edited by A.N. Bhagat, 3 parts.

It furnishes many facts about Ahalya Bai, Tukoji Holkar and Jaswant Rao Holkar. The description of the battle of Hadapsar is graphic and historical (First half, pt. I, No.76,77).

- 40-41. Holkar-Shahichya Itihasanchi Sadhaner, edited by B.B. Thakur, 2 volumes (1944-45).

It is indispensable for the history of Jaswant Rao Holkar. The

letters of Jaswant Rao throw sufficient light on his character, ideal and policy. Besides, these are full of significant details of historical importance. The volumes throw ample light on Jaswant's attitude towards the Peshwa (Vol. II, p.29), his policy towards Sindhia and Bhosle (Vol. II, pp.37-38), his anxiety for the defence of Swarajya (Vol. II, p.46), and his interest in administrative affairs (Vol. II, 61, 68, 73, 82). The Battles of Hadapsar (Vol. II, pp.41-42) and Ujjain (Vol. II, 38) have been vividly described. Some letters reveal his faith in God (Vol. II, p.42), his respect for Ahalya Bai (Vol. II, p.19) and the Faqirs (Vol. II, p.36). Holkarshahichya Itihasanchi Sadhane is one of the most valuable works for our purpose, and it brings the career of Jaswant Rao Holkar into a fresh focus.

42. Holkaranchi Kaifyat, edited by K.N. Sane (1886).

This work is of much value and often supplies new information though not always in sufficient details. It throws light on the death of Malhar Rao Holkar I (p.34), piety of Ahalya Bai (p.38), Jaswant's escape from Nagpur (p.75), Jaswant in exile, the Widows of Mahadji Sindhia (p.82), the Battle of Hadapsar (pp.94-95) and the insanity of Jaswant Rao Holkar (p.110). It makes a tall claim that Ranoji Sindhia's rise was due to Malhar Rao Holkar I (pp.8-9).

43-44. Aitihāsik Patren Yadi Waghaire, edited by Sardesai, Y.H. Kale and V.S. Vakaskar in two volumes.

It is a collection of 501 original letters which appeared in the now defunct Kavya Itihas Samgraha of the late Rao Bahadur K.N. Sane. It contains several important letters regarding Jaswant Rao Holkar. The letter of Ramchandra Dikshit and Lakshmi Narayan Dikshit (dated शु २३ भा. २०२४ or 11-8-1802) throws light on the activities

of Fateh Singh Mane. It is valuable for Jaswant's Deccan campaign and Bajji Rao II's flight from Poona (p.437). The letters bear the mark of authenticity.

45. Aitihasik Patravvabahara, edited by Sardesai, Kulkarni and Kale(1933).

It is a collection of 447 original letters of the Nagpur Bhosles most of which were published by Sane and Parasnis in the Kavya Itihas Samgraha and the Bharatvarsha. These papers were reprinted in an enlarged and carefully arranged edition by Sardesai and others. It contains many letters sent by Jaswant Rao Holkar to Daulat Rao Sindhia and Raghuji Bhosle. In a letter (dated अष्ट शु २०२५) Jaswant expresses his desire for reconciliation with Sindhia through Raghuji Bhosle. Another letter (dated राक २०२५ आ. ४. २३) reveals Jaswant's anxiety for the formation of a Maratha coalition against the British (p.330).

46-48. Shindeshahi Itihasanchi Sadhane, edited by A.B. Phalke.

These four volumes contain material concerning the House of Sindhia and the House of Holkar. Volume II is eminently valuable for our purpose. It contains many letters of Vasudev Raghunath, Kesav Rai, Lalaji Ballal Gulgule and Bisan Singh addressed to Jaswant Rao and proves that the latter was not altogether indifferent to administrative affairs. It shows the growing importance of Balram Agarwal in Jaswant's administration. From a letter of Vasudeva Raghunath (Vol. II, p.115), we know the title assumed by Jaswant Rao Holkar.

49-50. Chandra-chur Daftar, Vol. I. edited by D.V. Apte (1920).

Vol.II. edited by K.B. Dongre (1934).

These two volumes furnish many facts about the House of Holkar, particularly about Ahalya Bai and Tukoji Holkar. These letters are of considerable historical importance. Tukoji Holkar's relations with Nawab Shuja-ud-daula of Oudh are to be found in a letter (Vol.I, p.127) dated १६८२ कार्तिक वद्य १३).

Original Sources - English.

50-59. English Records of Maratha History - Poona Residency Correspondence. General Editors - Jadunath Sarkar and G. S. Sardesai.

No student can afford to ignore the Poona Residency records for the study of that critical period of Indian history during which the British wrested the sovereignty of India from the Marathas. The British Residents posted at Indian Courts kept their masters fully informed of happenings inside and outside the states and enabled them to formulate their policies. It is from the Poona Residency records that a clear picture of Anglo-Maratha relations can be obtained. They contain enough material for the study of Jaswant Rao Holkar. In the present work the following volumes have been used.

- Vol. I. Mahadji Sindhia and North Indian Affairs (1785-94).
- " II. Poona Affairs - Malet's Embassy 1786-1797.
- " V. Nagpur Affairs, 1781-1820
- " VI. Poona Affairs - Palmer's Embassy, 1797-1801.
- " VII. Poona Affairs - Close's Embassy, 1801-1810.
- " VIII. Daulat Rao Sindhia and North Indian Affairs, 1794-1799.
- " IX. Daulat Rao Sindhia and North Indian Affairs, 1800-1803.
- " X. Treaty of Bassein and War in the Deccan, 1802-1804.
- " XI. Daulat Rao Sindhia's Affairs, 1804-1809.
- " XIV. Sindhia's affairs 1810-1818.

Volume V of Poona Residency Correspondence Series yields valuable information on Jaswant Rao's relations with the Nagpur Raja (Nos. 28, 29, 34, 125, 127), the Battle of Hadapsar (68, 69), his relations with Sindhia (115, 121, 122) and his efforts to revive the Maratha Confederacy (84-86). In volume VI, letters of Palmer, dated 8th February, 1798; 19th April, 1799; 21st September, 1799; 28th April, 1800 are

important for our purpose. Palmer had not proved vigorous enough in promoting Wellesley's ambitious policy, but he wrote a clear and forceful style and went straight at things. This volume furnishes important facts about the night attack on Malhar Rao Holkar II (pp.42, 45, 46) and Jaswant at Nagpur (pp. 134, 140, 156). Volume VII contains many important details regarding Holkar-Sindhia alliance (pp.53, 54, 65, 263) and the activities of Mir Khan (pp.69, 76, 404, 411). Volume VIII throws light on Jaswant's relations with the Kota Raja in 1799 (pp.197, 201, 207). Volume IX is of great value for Widows' War (p.26), Jaswant's relations with Ambaji Ingle (pp.50-52, 138-140), Sindhia-Holkar relations (pp.321-324). Holkar's activities near Aurangabad (p.188) and in July and August, 1803 (pp.336,407). Volume X is useful for Jaswant Rao's ascendancy at Poona. Letter of Close to the Governor-General dated October 30, 1802 describes how Amrit Rao was brought to Poona (pp.39-41). Another letter dated November 28, 1802, clearly shows that Close was never inclined to support the New Regime of Jaswant Rao Holkar (p.50). Volume XI, more concerned with Sindhia's affairs, however, throws light on Holkar's campaign in North India and the assemblage at Sabalgaad. Volume XIV mentions some important facts about the last days of Holkar (pp.14, 51) and the activities of Mir Khan (pp.4, 50). The letter of R. Strachey, the Resident with Sindhia, to N.B. Edmonstone helps us in knowing about the correct date of Jaswant Rao Holkar's death (p.95).

60. Bengal Secret and Political Consultations, 1796-1818.

It mentions many important facts about Jaswant Rao Holkar. It throws light on the demands of Holkar from Sindhia and the Peshwa (1803, 21 February (1)), the activities of Vithoji Holkar (1801, 3rd June (49)), the campaign of Fateh Singh Mane (1803, 21 February (28)),

and Bajji Rao II's military preparations against Jaswant Rao Holkar (1803, 21 February (20)).

61. Bombay Political and Secret Proceedings, 1796-1809.

It provides absolutely original material for the study of Jaswant Rao Holkar. Particularly important are the facts relating to the state of affairs at Poona on the eve of the Battle of Hadapsar (1802, 25th September, p.4553), Holkar's ascendancy at Poona (1803, 15th April, p.2277), and Amrit Rao (1803, 27th May, p.3201).

62. Home Miscellaneous Series (India Office Records).

This series contains papers on miscellaneous subjects. Papers 573, 574, 575 are useful for our purpose. It gives a graphic description of the reign of terror created by Sharza Rao at Poona (573, pp. 21, 29).

63. Papers re Mahratta War, 1803 (Parliamentary Papers printed by the East India Company).

The papers supply detailed information regarding Bajji Rao II's flight from Poona (p.342), Amrit Rao's arrival at Poona after Hadapsar (p.344), the Treaty of Bassein (pp.395-418), Jaswant Rao's exactions at Poona (p.359), Jaswant's plan of sending his troops to Baroda to enforce the payment of 20 lakhs of rupees from Gaekwad (p.376) and the activities of Mir Khan and Fateh Singh Mane.

64. Papers re Indian Affairs, 1808-1813 (Parliamentary Papers)

It is not very useful for our purpose, though Jaswant Rao has been mentioned frequently in the papers.

65. Correspondence of Cornwallis by Ross in 3 volumes.

The third volume is valuable for us. From the study of several

papers, it becomes clear that Pitt was annoyed with the expansionist policy of Lord Wellesley. Several of the despatches in these volumes are to be found in Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. XIV.

66-78. Asiatic Annual Register, annual volumes for 1799-1811.

These volumes contain much original matter. An interesting paper discloses that even before the Battle of Hadapsar, Baji Rao II had secretly sent to Resident Close a written agreement to cede lands worth 25 lakhs of rupees a year in return for a British protective force of six battalions of sepoys to be permanently stationed in his dominions (1804, State Papers, pp.68-70). They throw ample light on the Battle of Hadapsar (1803, Bombay Occurrences, p.54 and Bengal Occurrences, pp.59-61), the strength of Jaswant Rao's army (1803, State Papers, p.59), the Governor General's proclamation to Sindhia's troops (1804, State Papers, p.276), the restoration of Baji Rao II to Poona (1804, State Papers, p.103), the demands of Holkar from the British and Lake's preparations for war against Holkar (1805, State Papers, pp.264-272) and Jaswant Rao's relations with Begam Samru (1805, State Papers, pp.261-262). These volumes throw a flood of light on the activities of Jaswant Rao Holkar.

79-83. Wellington's Despatches, edited by Lt. Col. Gurwood in 5 volumes (1837).

Volumes I and III are particularly useful for us. Arthur Wellesley had a poor opinion of Holkar's army (Vol. III, p.171) and believed that war against Jaswant Rao Holkar should not last more than a fortnight (Vol. III, pp.232-233). One of his letters to Major Shaw furnishes additional information about Sindhia-Holkar conflict (Vol. III, p.389). He gives a vivid account of devastations done by Mir Khan in his campaign (Vol. I, p.508). Arthur Wellesley always

urged the Governor General to take prompt action before the Maratha coalition was formed.

83-87. Despatches of Marquess Wellesley, edited by Mont. Martin, 5 volumes (1836).

For a history of Jaswant Rao Holkar, there is abundant material in these volumes. In a letter to Dundas dated February 28, 1798, Wellesley explains his Maratha policy (Vol. I, p.21). The letters and despatches yield valuable information on Lord Wellesley's Frenchphobia (Vol. II, p.97), Jaswant's ascendancy at Poona (Vol. III, pp.5-10), Wellesley's estimate of Lake (Vol. II, p.471) and his policy towards Holkar (Vol. IV, p.4) and Holkar's efforts to settle differences with Sindhia through British arbitration (Vol. III, p.76). Lord Wellesley had a poor opinion of the military strength of Jaswant Rao Holkar (Vol. IV, pp.189-193). Some papers throw light on Jaswant Rao's demands from the British Government (Vol. IV, p.105) and the retreat of Monson (Vol. IV, p.183).

88. A Selection of Wellesley's Despatches, edited by S.J. Owen.

The dispatch of the Governor-General in Council to the Secret Committee of the Court of Directors, 15th June, 1804 (pp.449-468), Monson's letter to General Lake, 2nd September, 1804 (pp.525-529), Lake's letter to Lord Wellesley dated July 1, 1805 (pp.531-543) and the important despatch of the Governor General in Council to the Secret Committee March 24, 1805 (pp.470-521) have been included in this work.

89. A Selection of Wellington's Despatches, edited by S.J. Owen.

It misses very few despatches and letters important for our purpose. Some papers show that Daulat Rao Sindhia was daily exchanging

messages with the Peshwa even after the Treaty of Bassein (pp.243-244) and that Arthur Wellesley felt the necessity of winning over Amrit Rao (p.348). Arthur Wellesley assured Amrit Rao of British protection against the Peshwa as against other chiefs (p.271), and justified his action in a letter to Dundas (p.348).

90. Selections from State Papers (Maratha Series), edited by Forrest.

The papers throw considerable light on the activities of Baji Rao II after Hadapsar (pp.551-552; 557-558) and the role of Close in the New Regime at Poona (pp.562, 572-575). A paper discloses that the Patwardhans did not cooperate with Jaswant Rao Holkar (pp.589-590)

91. Selections from the Minutes and other official writings of Elphinstone, edited by Forrest.

It possesses an independent value because, Elphinstone was with the Resident at Poona when the Battle of Hadapsar was fought. He accompanied Close when the Treaty with the Peshwa was negotiated at Bassein and again returned to Poona with Sir Arthur Wellesley when the Peshwa was reinstated in Power. Elphinstone was in favour of granting a khilat to Malhar Rao Holkar III and was sympathetic to Jaswant Rao Holkar in his last days.

92. Treaties, Engagements and Sanads by Aitchison in VII volumes.

It is useful for various treaties between the Company and the Maratha Chiefs. The Treaty of Bassein may be studied in Vol. III (pp.65-75).

93. Thirty years in India by Major H. Bevan in 2 volumes.

Bevan was an army officer in the 27th Regiment, Madras Native Infantry of the East India Company. This book is a 'soldier's reminiscences of Native and European life in the Presidencies from

1808 to 1838.' Volume I is useful for our purpose. Bevan has left a vivid description of Khandesh in the first decade of the nineteenth century (Vol. I, p.177).

94. Memoirs of William Hickey, edited by Alfred Spencer.

Volume IV (1790-1809) contains several references to Jaswant Rao Holkar, the siege of Aligarh by Lake (p.273) and the retreat of Monson (p.295). Hickey criticises Sir George Barlow as 'silk-mercing knight of the Bath' (p.344). He writes that Jaswant escaped from Farrukhabad in the guise of a Faqir (p.296). According to Hickey, the English had underestimated the abilities of Jaswant Rao Holkar (p.295).

95. Letters from a Maratha Camp by T.D. Broughton (Constable's edition, 1892).

Broughton gives a vivid description of the army of Daulat Rao Singhia (pp.21, 43, 109, 110, 121). He writes, "The whole army then presented the appearance rather of a rustic city than a camp, and reminded us of that which is described by Gibbon as the residence of Attila in the wilds of Germany (p.22)". His pen-sketch of Sharza Rao Ghatge (p.50) is interesting.

96. Papers relative to the progress of the British power in India and subsidiary System, by B.S. Jones.

B.S. Jones was Assistant Secretary to His Majesty's Commission for the affairs of India in 1832. Papers published in the volume were sent to Charles Grant, Chairman of the Select Committee of the House of Commons. From these papers it becomes obvious that Lord Wellesley was well-prepared for the war against the Marathas (p. 7).

On Subsidiary Alliance, Jones comments that it 'had the inevitable tendency to bring every Indian State into which it was introduced sooner or later under the exclusive dominion of British Government.' (p.96).

97. History of events and Transactions in India by Lord Wellesley, 1805.

These papers of Lord Wellesley were addressed to the Secret Committee of the Court of Directors of the East India Company. They are useful for the study of Jaswant Rao Holkar's ascendancy at Poona. A paper discloses that Holkar tried to win over the Nizam to his side (p.36). He remarks on the Treaty of Bassein that it 'seemed to hold out a very valuable opportunity for establishing in the most complete manner the interests of the British power in the Mahratta Empire.' (p.23).

98. A Vindication of the Late War by Lord Wellesley.

Lord Wellesley in this work expressed the opinion that the Second Anglo-Maratha War gave the British unquestionable supremacy over the Maratha States and it paved the way for the establishment of an Indian Empire (p.18), and peace for the country.

99-100. Military Reminiscences extracted from a Journal of nearly forty years active service in the East Indies by Colonel James Welsh of the Madras Establishment in 2 volumes.

Welsh gives a good description of the city of Poona. He writes that Amrit Rao never intended to burn the city (Vol. I, p.152).

101. Political History of India (1784-1823) by Malcolm in 2 volumes.

Volume I is useful for our purpose. Malcolm writes about the efforts of Wellesley to break-up the Maratha confederacy (p.247).

He remarks that the rooted animosities and clashing interests of the Maratha chiefs were the main obstacle in the formation of a strong Maratha coalition (p.254).

102-103. Memoirs of the Life of Sir James Mackintosh, edited by his son Robert James Mackintosh in 2 volumes (1835).

Mackintosh gives a very good pen-sketch of the personality of Bajji Rao II (Vol. I, p.284). He was more impressed by Bajji Rao II than by Napoleon or George III. He writes about the dissipated habits of Jaswant Rao (Vol. I, p.459).

104. Voyages and travels to India, Ceylon, the Red Sea, Abyssinia and Egypt in 1802-1806 by George Viscount Valentia in 3 volumes, 1809.

Volume III is useful for our purpose. Valentia writes that Amrit Rao invited Jaswant Rao Holkar to attack Poona (Vol. III, p.136). He refers to cow-slaughter in the camp of Jaswant Rao (Vol. III, p.115), the treaty of Bassein (Vol. III, p.134) and the predatory campaign of Holkar (Vol. III, p.113).

105-106. Our Indian Empire by Charles Macfarlane, in 2 volumes.

It is unreliable. He writes that the Peshwa asked for British help after his defeat at the hands of Sindhia!! (Vol. I, p.95).

107. Rise and Progress of the British Power in India by Peter Auber, 1837.

The account is too brief to be of any value.

108. Political and Military Events in British India from the years 1756 to 1849 by Major William Hough.

It is full of inaccuracies. He writes that Jaswant Rao Holkar succeeded Tukoji Holkar in 1797 (p.235)!!

109. Considerations on the state of British India by Lt. A. White of the Bengal Native Infantry, 1822.

It throws light on the rise of the Pindaris. White remarks, "The contests between Scindiah and Holkar, for the mastery of the Mahratta empire, appear to have been the principal causes of the rise of Pindaree power." (p.206).

110. Notes Relative to Transactions in Mahratta Empire by Malcolm.

There are valuable reflections in this work. It gives a good picture of the decline and fall of the Maratha power.

- 111-112. History of the Political and Military Transactions in India during the administration of the Marquess of Hastings (1813-1823) by Henry T. Prinsep in 2 volumes.

Prinsep gives a vivid description of Daulat Rao Sindhia's administration (Vol. I, pp.23-28) and shows the difference between the Pathans and the Pindaris (Vol. I, pp. 48-49).

113. Summary of the Mahratta and Pindaree War by Prinsep.

It misses no fact of importance and is a very useful book.

114. Memoir and Correspondence of Wellesley by Pearce.

Some important letters of Wellesley relevant to our subject are to be found in this work.

115. Memoir of the Life of the Late Nana Farnavees compiled from family Records by A. Macdonal, Captain, 18th Regiment Bombay Native Infantry, 1851.

It is neither very reliable nor comprehensive. It refers to the relations between Nana Fadnavis and Bajji Rao II (pp.125-126), the death of Malhar Rao Holkar II (p.119), and Jaswant Rao's flight to Nagpur (p.119).

116. Memoir of the Extraordinary Military Career of John Shipp.
(F. Unwin's edition).

It contains a good description of the siege of Bharatpur by Lake.

117. The Marquis of Wellesley's History of the Maratha War, 1803 by
Lumsden.

The author writes about the French-phobia of Lord Wellesley (p.8). According to him, the object of Jaswant Rao Holkar was to obtain possession of the person of the Peshwa and then to compel him to rule according to the former's wishes (p.13).

118. Historical Account of the Bengal Native Infantry (1817) by Williams.

From this work it becomes clear how well Lake trained his army for the Maratha War (p.275). There is a valuable reference to racial composition of Sindhia's disciplined infantry (p.292).

119. Twelve years' Military Adventure by J. Blackinton (1829) in
2 volumes.

It is important for the battles fought by Daulat Rao Sindhia against the English, particularly, the Battle of Assaye.

120. Narrative of Journey through the upper provinces in India by
R. Heber (1828) in 2 volumes.

Rev. Reginald Heber was the Lord Bishop of Calcutta. His work is not useful for our purpose. It, however, gives an idea of the conditions that existed in the northern part of India.

121. Sketches of India by F. Wyne (1816).

It gives a general picture of the political condition of India in the early decades of the nineteenth century. It throws light on the relations between Lord Wellesley and Shah Alam II, the Mughal Emperor (pp.103-111).

122. History of the Marathas by Scott Waring (1810).

It furnishes some significant details about Tukoji Holkar. The author was too near Jaswant Rao Holkar in point of time and could not judge him in the proper perspective; all the same his work is valuable as a contemporary record.

123. Memoirs of Briggs (edited by Bell).

It is not of much value for this work. A few minor events can be taken notice of.

124. Mahratta War by Blacker.

In this work there are several references to Jaswant Rao Holkar (pp.2-5), but no new light is thrown on the subject.

125. Institutions of the Mahratta people by Tone.

It gives a good description of the administrative system of the Marathas. Tone's pen-sketch of Bajji Rao II is interesting.

126. Travels in India by Twining.

Twining has left a vivid description of dismal state of affairs that prevailed in the Maratha State, specially in the territories of Sindhia. (pp.285-288).

127. The Life of Major General Sir Thomas Munro by Gleig in 2 volumes.

It contains many letters of Munro, a contemporary of Jaswant Rao, in reference to the Anglo-Maratha conflict and the siege of Bharatpur.

128. Life of Elphinstone by Colebrooke in 2 volumes.

Elphinstone was a contemporary of Jaswant Rao Holkar. This work contains valuable remarks of Elphinstone on the Maratha chiefs and the Maratha affairs. Gangadhar Shastri's opinion of Jaswant Rao Holkar is interesting (Vol. I, p.276).

129. Life and Correspondence of Lord Metcalfe by Kaye in 2 volumes (1858).

Metcalfe was a politician of the Wellesley school and disliked the policy of Cornwallis and Barlow. He was one of those British officers who encouraged Lake to give Jaswant Rao a hot chase. His description of Jaswant Rao is vivid and it has been quoted in Pearse's *Memoir of the Life and Military Services of Viscount Lake* (p.407).

- 130-131. Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan by Tod in 2 volumes.

Tod, a contemporary of Jaswant Rao, throws ample light on the death of Lucan (Vol. II, p.598), Jaswant's campaign in Rajputana (Vol. I, pp.529-530) and the Krishnakumari episode. His careful and informative reports on the Pindaris have been printed in Poona Residency Correspondence. Vol. XIV (Nos. 319, 321).

132. Military Memoir of Mr. George Thomas, compiled and arranged from Mr. Thomas' original documents by William Franckli^{tv}, 1806.

It contains a valuable description of the strength of Jaswant Rao Holkar's army (pp.365-367). According to Thomas, Holkar's cavalry was superior to that of Sindhia.

133. Sketches of the Relations subsisting between the British Government in India and the different Native States by Captain

J. Sutherland of third Regiment Bombay Light cavalry, 1837.

It furnishes for the present work some information about the retreat of Monson (pp.68-69) and the army of Lake.

134. Journal of a route across India through Egypt to England by Lt. Col. Fitzclarence, 1819.

This work is important for the study of the Pindaris. The author

made the journey in the later end of the year 1817 and the beginnings of 1818.

135. War and Sport in India (1802-1806).

John Pester was a cadet of the East India Company's army in September, 1800. He was appointed a Lieutenant on the 17th July, 1801. This work is Pester's Diary which gives a running account of Lake's campaign in North India between 1802-1806. It furnishes many facts about the Battle of Dig (p.343) and the siege of Bharatpur (pp.375-392).

136-137. History of India by Mill and Wilson. Volumes VI and VII are useful for our purpose.

It throws light on Vithoji's activities (VI, p.269), the retreat of Monson (VI, p.404), Harnath Singh's failure at Delhi (VI, p.411), Jaswant's defeat at Farrukhabad (VI, p.417) and the siege of Bharatpur. Mill is wrong in stating that Jaswant Rao Holkar fled away from Nagpur to Maheshwar (VI, p.269). According to Mill, the treaty of Bassein did not produce the tranquillity of all India and it produced one of the most widely extended wars which India has ever seen (VI, pp. 323-324). Wilson remarks that the Treaty of Bassein did not create the necessity although it involved the contingency of war.

137-139. History of the Marathas by Grant Duff in 3 volumes.

Captain Grant, who later added Duff to his original name, was a contemporary of Jaswant Rao Holkar. As the Assistant of Elphinstone, the last Resident at the Peshwa's court at Poona, Duff had access to original Marathi documents. This work was published in 1826. It yields valuable and generally authentic information on the rise of

Jaswant Rao Holkar (Vol. II, 279-285) and the execution of ~~Vithalrao Holkar~~ (Vol. II, p.199), Jaswant's relations with Daulat Rao Sindhia (Vol. II, pp.206-210), the Battles of Dig and Farrukhabad (pp.289-290). The account of the retreat of Monson (Vol. II, 279-285) and the siege of Bharatpur (Vol. II, 293-299) is brief but accurate. It is difficult to agree with all the opinions and conclusions of Duff whose writing 'was tinged with a bias in favour of the ruling race.' Duff's estimate of Jaswant's character is extremely valuable (p.320).

140-141. Memoirs of Central India by Malcolm in 2 volumes.

It is a most valuable work for the biography of Jaswant Rao Holkar. Malcolm, a contemporary of Jaswant Rao, was more balanced, subtle and discerning than Duff. He contributes new information to the subject and his account is interpretative and not a forests of facts. Malcolm combined scholarship with keen observation, charm, with elegance of style. He always tried to gather information from persons who actually participated in the events or were eye-witnesses of them. Malcolm throws a flood of light on Ahalya Bai (Vol. I, pp.160-195), the last phase of Jaswant Rao Holkar's career (Vol. I, pp.241-253), character of Jaswant Rao (Vol. I, pp.253-259), and the events at the court of Holkar from 1808 to 1811 (Vol. I, pp.260-283). His account of the Battle of Ujjain (Vol. I, pp.215-216) is however, not very reliable. He furnishes additional information on the Battle of Indore (Vol. I, pp.217-219). Malcolm has not described the conflict between Jaswant Rao Holkar and the English and the main events connected with it. On the whole his work is of very high value and of surpassing interest.

142-143. Military Memoir of Lt. Col. James Skinner by J. Baillie Fraser, 1851 in 2 volumes.

Skinner was a distinguished officer, commanding a corps of irregular cavalry of the East India Company in the early decades of the nineteenth century. William Fraser, a brother of the author, was the most intimate friend that Skinner had. The writer himself was also Skinner's friend. The principal part of this work was taken from a manuscript placed in the hands of the writer by a son of Lt. Col. James Skinner. This work mentions some important facts about the battle of Ujjain (Vol. I, p.170), the Battle of Indore (Vol. I, pp.196-197), the predatory campaign of Holkar (Vol. II, pp. 34), and the death of Lucan (Vol. II, 32-33). The account of the retreat of Monson is detailed and valuable. There is a short sketch of considerable historical importance of the life and character of Mir Khan (Vol. II, pp.65-69).

144. Memoir of the War in India by Thorn.

Major William Thorn was a captain in the Twenty-fifth Light Dragoons of the East India Company's army in India. This work contains an account of the various battles and campaigns conducted by Lake and Arthur Wellesley in India from 1803-1806. Thorn, a contemporary of Jaswant Rao Holkar, furnishes us with the most detailed information regarding the Anglo-Holkar conflict. His narrative is not critical but he always writes with attention to minute details. Thorn is very accurate in dates. He had a very poor opinion of the Maratha Chiefs who 'on all occasions conceived themselves justified in acting upon the lax principle of expediency' (p.54). His character-sketch of Jaswant Rao Holkar is graphic and revealing (p.499). Thorn's work is a store-house of first hand historical material and contains important details.

Secondary Sources - English

145. Sir J. Fortescue - History of the British Army, Vol. V.
146. J. Macveih - Historical Records of the 78th High-Landers.
147. H. Pearse - Memoir of the Life and military Services of
Viscount Lake.
148. Torrens - The Marquess of Wellesley.
149. P.E. Roberts - India under Wellesley.
150. Ranade - Miscellaneous Writings.
151. N.C. Kelkar - The Marathas and the English.
152. Arbuthnot - Sir Thomas Munro.
153. Douglas - Bombay and Western India.
154. Gazetteers - Bombay and Poona.
155. Brockman - A Gazetteer of Eastern Rajputana.
156. Thornton - History of ^{The British Empire} India, Vol. V.
157. Cambridge History of India, Vol. V.
158. Beveridge - Comprehensive History of India, Vol. II.
159. Sardesai - New History of the Marathas, Vols. II and III.
160. Sarkar - Fall of Mughal Empire, Vols. III and IV.
161. Sarkar - House of Shivaji.
162. P.C. Gupta - Baji Rao II and the Company.
163. Kincaid and Parasnis - A History of the Maratha People.
164. Parasnis - Poona in Bygone Days.
165. Sardesai - Main Currents of Maratha History.
166. Keene - Hindustan under Free-Lances.
167. Thompson - Life of Charles Metcalfe.
168. Compton - ^{A Particular Account of the European} Military Adventures of Hindustan (1784-1803)
169. Qanungo - Historical Essays.
170. Qanungo - History of the Jats.

171. Singh - Malwa in Transition.

172. Sinha - Ranjit Singh.

173. Dighe - Baji Rao I and the Maratha Expansion in North India.

Secondary Source - Marathi

174. Sardesai - Marathi Riyasat.

Secondary Sources - Hindi.

175. Surajmal - Vamsa-bhaskar (part IV).

176. Kaviraj Shyamaldasji - Vir Vinod (part II).

177. Gauri Shankar Ojha - Rajputana ka Itihasa.

178. Mathur Lal Sharma - Kota Rajya ka Itihasa.

179. Thakur Desraj Jaghina - Jath ka Itihasa.
